

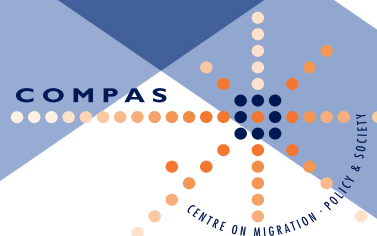
Autumn Academy 2016

Strategic Approaches to Migrant Integration in Europe

St Anne's College, Oxford
5 - 9 September 2016

Final Report

COMPAS



Autumn Academy 2016

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The symposium was an opportunity for those responsible for developing and implementing re-settlement and integration policies at EU, national and local level to share knowledge, expertise and ideas, to consider the implications of the latest research evidence and reflect on strategic policy options. This report summarises key points noted from presentations and, without attribution, from the discussions which followed. We acknowledge with thanks the significant contribution of Rachel Hughes and Sian Sanders to the preparation of this report.

The final session drew together some of the themes that emerged and this is also available separately [here](#). Links throughout the report provide access to the text or slides and, in some cases, audio recordings of presentations.

Contents

List of Speakers and Participants.....	2
Migration to Europe: drivers, trends and future scenarios	4
Implications for a city in the frontline	5
Geo-political instability, economic recession and security fears: implications for integration of past and future migrants	8
Turbulent times: Integration c.q. securitization: the case of Molenbeek, Brussels	9
Integration and the rise of the radical right in Western Europe	11
Understanding 'integration': the significance of evolving European models at national and local level	12
Intercultural cities: making diversity work.....	14
Recent trends in national integration policies and their significance	18
National policies: challenges and opportunities	20
Refugee economies: forced displacement and development	22
Integration of Refugees into Language, Training and Work	24
Refugee resettlement in Canada.....	25
Refugees, Integration and the Case of Vienna	28
Cities as Incubators of Integration	29
Welcoming Cities- Innovations from the US.....	31
Civil Society experiences at the local level.....	33
Funding Civil Society to Foster Integration- What should be our priorities?.....	35
Strategic Options for European Agendas.....	37
The Commission's new Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals	38
Labour market integration and social inclusion	39
Final session: Vision and the art of the possible.	40

List of Speakers and Participants

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Liz Collett	Director of MPI Europe, Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Brussels
Laura Corrado	Head of Unit, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, Brussels
Gabriele De Giorgi	Chief of political staff to the Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior, Italy
Hein de Haas	Professor of Sociology, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
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Padraic Quirk	Deputy Director, The Social Change Initiative (SCI), Belfast, Northern Ireland
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Ramon Sanahuja	Director of Interculturality, Municipality of Barcelona, Spain
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Catherine Woollard	Secretary General, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Brussels
Sabir Zazai	Director, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC), UK

view the list of participants as a separate document [here](#)

Monday evening 5th September: Opening Session

Welcome and Aims of the Symposium

Dr Sarah Spencer, Director of Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity

Migration to Europe: drivers, trends and future scenarios

Chair: Professor Bridget Anderson, Research Director, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford

Hein de Haas, Professor of Sociology, University of Amsterdam

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation argued that we need to rethink, fundamentally, what migration is. Humanitarian and security debates feed a crisis narrative, that migration is a problem to be solved; but in fact migration is a normal, inevitable, process.

The presentation addressed a series of 'migration myths' that need to be unpicked:

- We do not live in times of unprecedented mass migration. However, there have been changes in composition and direction to Europe, increased securitisation, and politicisation.
- Immigration restrictions do not reduce migration. Restrictions encourage people to enter the country using alternative channels; the prospect of border closure causes people to move in greater numbers and settle; and immigration regulation interrupts circulation making migration more permanent because it becomes more risky and more expensive to make further moves.
- Development does not reduce migration, it drives it; just as in destination countries labour demand drives migration.
- Migration alone will not solve an ageing population. We should also not assume that Europe will remain a major migration destination; and there may be less migration in future than we think. China for instance may attract increasing numbers of international migrants.

Migration policy is about selection. If policy does not match labour demands or reflect crises in the world there will be people who fall outside selection policies who find alternative routes. The lack of solidarity in the EU exacerbates these issues. We have a political crisis, not a migration crisis. Migration will continue and without effective integration policies we are creating the breeding ground for exclusion. Politicians should take responsibility and calm fears.

Discussion

The discussion focused on addressing the electoral politics of hostility to migrants, including a narrative to counter that of the far right, and effective integration measures, in the context of continuing migration to Europe:



The Autumn Academy was held in the tranquil setting of St Anne's College, Oxford

- Progress we have seen in the past, such as migrants finding employment and cohesion in mixed neighbourhoods, is being undone by the lack of jobs and by the negative tone of debate on migrants.
- The crisis is of democracy, in which politicians recognise they are losing trust. They use migration as a tool to handle public opinion, to prove they can provide solutions. It is easy to scape-goat migrants and to use the politics of fear. Closing borders, for instance, does not solve increasing migration, but it makes people feel more secure.
- Politicians are being told by the public that something must be done; they need answers that they can act on. Just saying that migration at this level is the new reality and the public must get used to it is not enough. Migration dynamics cannot be wished away but neither can electoral politics. Xenophobes are gaining votes and any solution needs to address why politicians should not follow that politics.
- Those who take a progressive perspective on migration do not currently have, but need, effective responses to the security framing of the public debate.
- Politicians are trying to solve challenges locally and nationally to a global issue. Rather than blaming foreigners and mobilising public insecurity, we need tools that will help to change the narrative. Politicians should speak the truth and they should be brave. There are going to be fewer jobs in the future whether numbers of migrants increase or not. There is a restructuring in employment; we facing societal challenges that will not be easy. We need to address them together.
- Do politicians really want to exercise control? Their role is to create the appearance of control while enabling migration to continue. The rhetoric on migration is harsh but entry policies globally are increasingly less restrictive because there is economic pressure to increase labour migration.¹ Politicians find it hard to reconcile liberal economies and the drive for fewer migrants. The most visible restrictive policies target only a few migrants but are high profile. However, not everyone benefits – the poor and former migrants can lose out. There is a tension between macro and micro processes that politicians have to manage.
- There are different issues at national and local level; different levels of governance with different competencies. Where the national narrative is difficult, it is evident in Europe and North America that it is possible to find local discourses that are inclusive and accepted. Even smaller cities see the benefits of migration and are not afraid to take part in the discourse. Businesses need to come forward to champion the contributions that migrants make to local economies.
- We need effective integration strategies, operating on a practical and emotional level. Practically, migrants must be matched to the labour market. Emotionally we need to change the words we use. Migrants should not be talked about as ‘inflow’ but as people.
- In this era of fact-free politics, the evidence and what academics say can have little effect. Ministers want answers – but is it an academic’s job to advise them what to do? How far should academics go down that road?

Implications for a city in the frontline

Lefteris Papagiannakis, Vice Mayor on Migrant and Refugee Affairs, City of Athens

Presentation

Athens has experienced a significant number of refugee arrivals over the past two years. The presentation focused on the implications for the city and its administration.

¹ De Haas, H., Natter, K. & Vezzoli, S. (2016). Growing Restrictiveness or Changing Selection? The Nature and Evolution of Migration Policies. *International Migration Review* <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/imre.12288/full>

Events far away in other countries can have a major impact at city level. Athens, as a capital city is an established destination for migrants and those in transit. Yet the sudden increase in numbers in 2015-2016 caught everyone by surprise and has had significant impacts. There was no plan, no organisation. The need to manage thousands of people, including children, raised challenging, management issues. It was also a time of political change in the country.

In 2014, 40,000 people had entered Greece. In November 2014 about 500 Syrian refugees occupied the central square of Athens for three weeks. It was the first glimpse of what was to follow. The projection for 2015 was 150,000 but more than 850,000 crossed the Turkish - Greek border alone. Currently there are more than 55,000 refugees on the mainland and about 11,000 in the surrounding islands. From the summer of 2015 until March 2016 Greece was a transit country and Athens a transit city; but when the borders closed in March it became a destination country and Athens a destination city.

The first priority was to provide emergency reception facilities with a view to moving towards more permanent accommodation and then integration. The majority of people who stay in Greece will eventually come to Athens so it was decided that the city should have appropriate policies to accommodate newcomers. It is difficult to have a plan without data on potential numbers and their needs. People camped in parks and squares so there was a need to create an accommodation centre. Eleonas camp opened in August 2015 with accommodation for 700 people arriving in Athens from the Islands. It now hosts over 2,400 people.



The city is collaborating with NGOs and international organisations to provide what is needed. The role of migrant communities has been crucial during this very difficult period. There is also important international activity advocating for solidarity.

There is no national integration policy except provisions for children to go to school. The role of cities is very important, on which discussion has begun at EU and the global level. Cities need to step in and implement their own policies but only Athens is doing so. Mayors are reluctant to discuss it.

A European integration policy is needed or at least integration strategies with a European dimension. Specific difficulties for implementing integration policies should be taken into account at EU level and

ways found to address them. Athens (and Greece) is facing a financial and social crisis. Because of the memorandums signed with the creditors it is unable to hire specialized personnel. The administration wants to do so much but has no money. It needs a specific exception to the EU rule for reception and integration work.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the role of cities across Europe; their need to take account of the particular dynamics at neighbourhood level, and challenges relating to EU policies:

- Cities are often driving integration policies in face of reluctance by national governments. EU policy makers can be more receptive than a city's own government. Yet how far are cities willing to go to try to change national policies? Consensual multi-level governance on integration, recognising cities' distinct role, is the way forward.
 - The experience of those working with migrants at grassroots level, on what is needed and workable, is not always taken into account by city policy makers. As a result there can be a gap between policy and implementation. NGO's 'welcoming' work is overshadowed by a media focus on negative responses to newcomers. NGOs want to do more but cities do not always have the capacity to support them.
 - The narrative on migrants differs between countries – in Portugal for instance, with five million Portuguese living abroad, there is no talk of not having migrants and attitudes are more positive.
 - The number of refugees is so small relative to the EU population: if we cannot solve this, what can we do? This is a crisis of solidarity not of migration.
 - Policy makes unhelpful distinctions between refugees and other migrants. EU policy is biased towards refugees, for instance in its funding of integration, yet there are many more migrants. Southern Europe has little tradition of formally recognised refugees but Northern Europe, where people are obliged to go through the asylum route, has dominated EU policies.
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Tuesday morning 6th September – Turbulent times

Chair: Ramon Sanahuja, Director of Interculturality, City of Barcelona

Geo-political instability, economic recession and security fears: implications for integration of past and future migrants

Joaquin Arango, Professor of Sociology, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

Europe has experienced three major external shocks that have created an unfavourable context for integration:

- The financial crisis, leading to rising unemployment, weaker social protection and greater ethno-stratification ('European segmented assimilation'); leading to perceptions of competition and unfair treatment among non-migrants, rising support for the far right (significantly, not in all countries); and fewer resources for integration programmes.
- Political instability - fuelling a refugee crisis, exposing a dysfunctional protection system and lack of EU solidarity, degraded standards of treatment, and major challenges for cities. There are perceptions of burden which fuel xenophobia, but there is also public solidarity.
- Terrorist attacks - promoting fear and suspicion associated with refugees.

The confluence of these factors has led to increased public anxiety about immigration, negatively affecting the process of integration.

Integration can be defined in many ways:

- The EU Common Basic Principles on Integration stress the bi-directionality of the integration process and the legal, economic and social conditions that migrants meet in the receiving society (European Commission 2004)². Migrant agency is important but most significant is the conditions they meet: primarily local but also national and supranational – and these are influenced by external shocks.
- 'A process of becoming an accepted part of society' (Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas 2016)³, affected by perceptions of the majority towards immigrants, in turn affected by external shocks.
- A multi-dimensional process across structural, social, and cultural domains and in relation to identity, that relies on a wide range of factors. The economic recession impacts most on the structural domain, the refugee crisis and security on the cultural and identificational.

What can be done?

- Do not ignore 'native' losers
- Vigorous European response to the refugee crisis including reforms to asylum systems, fast processing times, access to labour markets and active integration programmes.



Joaquin Arango,
Professor of Sociology,
Universidad
Complutense de
Madrid

² The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy. Justice and Home Affairs Council. November 2004
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf

³ B. Garcés-Mascreñas & R. Penninx (Eds.). (2016). Integration processes and policies in Europe: contexts, levels and actors. (IMISCOE research series). Cham: Springer Open <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-21674-4>

- Separate discussion of immigration and terrorism. Be vigilant to the difference between facts and interpretations.
- Improve intelligence and police services and all international and internal cooperation.
- Avoid mistakes – such as prohibition of the bourka.
- Recognition of cities as sites of integration.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the terminology of ‘integration’ and ‘migrants’; on the relationship between integration measures and outcomes; and the role of cities:

- The importance of moving beyond ‘acceptance’ or ‘tolerance’, and of choosing terminology embracing a two-way process; but also of not wasting energy on linguistic debates.
- A need for clarity on who is included in the ‘migrant’ category. Does it include students, refugees, EU mobile citizens and the second generation? It can be problematic that public opinion does not always distinguish.
- We understand too little about the relationship between different integration domains; why integration may progress in some domains but not in others, for example in relation to identity. Those responsible for terrorist attacks may be educated and employed but lack, or have come to lack, that dimension? We need to measure outcomes separately, and study inter-relationships.
- Which outcomes should be prioritised? Cultural acceptance or employment? In the current refugee crisis municipalities are focusing on immediate needs rather than setting benchmarks and evaluation procedures.
- Cities have some resilience against external shocks and take different approaches from national policies. Why? Proximity, involvement, interactions, perhaps? Hostility is easier at an abstract, national level.

Turbulent times: Integration c.q. securitization: the case of Molenbeek, Brussels

Johan Leman, President, FOYER, Minorities Centre, Molenbeek, Brussels

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation focused on learning from Molenbeek, a district of Brussels which has been associated with radicalisation and political violence: on the implications of that experience and the response of the authorities and media to it, for integration.

There are two forms of radicalisation: a non-violent rejection of inclusion and a more violent jihadization. Neither is new. The micro and macro processes engaged in radicalisation are inextricably linked. Migrants faced with assimilationist expectations, xenophobic attitudes and feelings that they are not accepted may use the internet to find an alternative identity. Jihadization has been traced to the end of the 1990s. The ideas and people who propagate it are highly mobile in Europe. There are micro processes that are linked across European cities; and transnationally imported political conflicts which are exacerbated by the media.

These processes find a strong foothold in areas where education and labour market conditions do not promote integration. Success at school and in the labour market is the minimal condition for integration, but people who ‘succeed’ move out of these areas and therefore are not role models. Such areas often have large population churn so populations are continuously changing. This exacerbates challenging conditions for frontline services, particularly teachers. School and education

policies are generally developed at the national level and are not suited to these areas. The schools are stigmatised as 'bad' schools.

There is no one cause: drivers are plural and variable. Potential factors to avoid radicalisation of youth and foster integration are:

- Avoid increasing foreign influences in the area: difficult as internet and TV channels face migrant youth with complex processes of identification. Also a need to avoid deviant local power structures.
- Resource inter-ethnic communication, facilitated by NGOs, building positive social capital so groups can get on together.
- Strengthen links between school and accessing employment.
- Resist stigmatisation of neighbourhoods; ensure they are seen to be valued by those in authority.
- Avoid victimisation in political speeches and media.
- Socialise young people to a broader understanding of the world.
- Combat drug dealing and other sources of easy money.
- Build trust in official authority structures, ensure diverse representation, and challenge conspiracy theories so that those in authority are believed.
- Resource local services: the areas coping with migration are the places that are already struggling.

Discussion

The discussion focused on measures to counter the effects of transnationally imported conflicts; the roles of government and non-governmental agencies; and the needs of children and young people:

- Inequality is a key driver. Parents working long hours leave children disconnected and vulnerable to exploitation. Young people need a tailored approach to their particular integration needs.
- Protective factors against the effects of transnationally imported radicalisation include strong networks e.g. being a member of an NGO or faith network that has strong links to local municipalities. Those most at risk to being targeted by imported conflicts are poor, isolated or involved in drug dealing or low-level criminal activities with little hope in the future. Local civil society actors should map particular populations or areas where they do not have a strong presence and be resourced to target those areas or communities.
- Securitisation means feeling watched, of non-acceptance, which counters feelings of belonging. This needs to be recognised when determining the balance between surveillance and positive engagement.
- The situation we face is an 'internationalisation of non-belonging.'
- Differing governance structures reduce the capacity of some authorities to address these challenges.
- We should study those diverse areas which do not have jihadization to understand the factors which contribute to it.
- Residents need help to recognise implications of population churn: newcomers may not do the same things but can still be good neighbours.
- Role models are important and should be championed in local areas.
- Clear and consistent positions should be taken in NGOs, local administration and national government to build trust in authority structures.
- Those who reside in urban areas are more resilient to xenophobic attitudes. It is easier to be hostile in abstract terms than at the street-level. There is a tension between different levels of policy-making exacerbated by national politicians not connecting to local communities.

Integration and the rise of the radical right in Western Europe

Robert Ford, Professor of Politics, University of Manchester

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation focused on understanding the drivers of recent shifts in attitudes and in support for the far right. Anti-migrant sentiment is not on the rise in the aggregate, but we are seeing greater expression of it. The public do not see migrants as an undifferentiated mass: there are nuanced attitudes to different kinds of migrant. Identity markers change attitudes as do skills regardless of the ethnic origin of the migrants: in perceptions, professional level skills counteract ethnic disadvantage. Attitudes towards migration must be analysed within their socio-economic context.

There has been six-fold increase in the radical right in 13 countries in the last 36 years: moving from fringe to a central role in some countries; in others a large presence but not disruptive; and finally 'new and booming', where previously insignificant. There is no presence in Spain, Portugal (recent memories of authoritarianism?) or Ireland (radicalism mobilised in another direction by Sinn Fein?) but this could change.

Characteristics of the radical right are nationalism, authoritarianism, anxiety about social change, disaffection with democracy and with the left. These narratives are linked to immigration, forming the unifying cause around which these parties build a consensus.

Actors on the radical right have positioned themselves as defenders of liberal values against minority



intolerance. In response, established actors become more conservative. The radical right has reoriented political competition and this has led to divisions within parties. It has mobilised identity conflicts into politics and displaced other conflicts.

The process can be likened to making a fire: you start with tinder (underlying conditions), next comes a spark (immigration) and then flames (mobilisation by new political actors). UKIP demonstrates this in the UK:

- **Tinder:** socially conservative, older, working class voters feeling marginalised by political structures dominated by educated middle classes.
- **Spark:** rise in immigration with perceived negative economic and cultural impacts.
- **Flame:** Public lost faith in political parties promising but failing to reduce immigration; emergence of UKIP leader in Farage, giving media expression to concerns, mobilised identity conflicts into politics proffering solution, and social conservative views on other issues.

Discussion

Participants were asked to discuss in groups what they would advise a Minister responsible for addressing this situation to do. Suggestions focused on narrative:

- To develop a humanitarian narrative, with careful choice of language (not ‘tolerance’); emphasising that if refugees remain they contribute to the economy or if they return they contribute to reconstruction. We need to address the argument that refugees are a threat, but some argued for a focus on sentiment rather than expect to win the argument with facts.
- Emphasise the country’s international obligations to meet refugee’s needs, and inform refugees of their rights and obligations.
- Use education to prepare populations to be resilient to populist politics.
- Tell voters where nationalism leads – to breaches of the rule of law, against democracy and human rights – to expose the consequences of what they propose.
- Mobilise opinion leaders at the urban level who carry weight with voters.
- Remind voters they were immigrants in earlier decades.
- Use far right symbols, patriotism and the flag, while arguing for alternative policies that chime with voters values, showing that far right policies lead to outcomes that conflict with their values. Mobilise liberal values with the right narrative, while addressing concerns with messages (such as refugee long term return) that are reassuring.

Tuesday afternoon 6th September: Integration: what is it and what is the goal?

Chair: Henrik Thomassen, Ministry of Immigration and Integration, Denmark

Understanding ‘integration’: the significance of evolving European models at national and local level

Christophe Bertossi, Director, Center for Migration and Citizenship, Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI), Paris

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation reflected on what we mean by ‘integration’, and the need to question assumptions about differing national traditions across Europe.

There is an inherent tension in the word ‘integration’. It is about inclusion and cooperation, but the term also suggests public anxiety that those goals are not possible or desirable. The treatment of minorities can be in practice be excluding in the name of integration.

Integration can mean exclusion and inclusion depending on the context in which it is used. These contexts are constantly being renegotiated and therefore the meaning of integration is in flux.

Integration is most often described as a cultural, social or identity problem. Its central role in politics impacts on the nature of the discourse about it.

Member States do not have a common understanding how to approach integration. The issue has become more complex since the rise of discourse on 'values'. There are ideas and ways of life in national contexts which politicians must be seen to defend. These ideas are seen not only to represent 'who we are' but also 'who we've been'.

Integration can be conceptualised as two interrelated axes: a focus on national identity or on rights; and within the latter a polarity between group based rights (multiculturalism, with a logic of accommodation) and individual rights (assimilation, the logic of republicanism). The differences among countries can be seen as a search for the best model. It cannot be answered empirically as it reflects a normative preference.

It is important not to assume any policy relating to a group is multiculturalism: e.g. the source of the right to religious freedom is not a commitment to multiculturalism but enshrined within the framework of fundamental rights. Nor do models reflect reality: e.g. French military Muslim chaplains that have an annual pilgrimage to Mecca: institutions adapt to social change regardless of the model and are key sites for understanding processes. We cannot frame integration as either assimilation or multiculturalism: it is more complicated in the policy environment.

So how can we define integration? There are many definitions including Sarah Spencer's: 'processes of interaction between migrants and the individuals and institutions of the receiving society that facilitate economic, social, cultural and civic participation and an inclusive sense of belonging at the national and local level' (Spencer 2011: 203)⁴. Integration could also be seen as societies producing members. As Durkheim wrote, 'it is not individuals that are integrated but societies'.

Regardless of whether an integrated society produces members or whether individuals are integrated into a shifting society, the reframing raises an important often neglected dimension of the current 'crises' in Europe: we do not have clear expectations of members or how to produce them. Europe is fragile because there is no consensus regarding what membership looks like.

The risk to integration today is the substantial proportion of the population who are renouncing liberal values and promoting nativism. It is important to distinguish between racism and nativism. The notion of racism and unchangeable groups leads to politics of segregation. Nativism leads to politics of exclusion or forced assimilation: the culturalisation of citizenship.

If integration is a problem, it is a problem of natives. More research is needed to explore why those who hold these views are not integrated themselves. One way to think about this issue is through the lens of the current crisis of representative democracy. There is not a 'toolkit' through which to address the issue of 'native integration' but this is one line along which we can think.

Discussion

Discussion focused on the unresolved issue of the implications of using the term 'integration', on barriers to integration, and the shift to identity politics:

- 'Citizenship' is an alternative term to 'integration'. Terminology matters when it embodies a notion that migrants bring problems, and if it masks realities taking place on the ground. Many issues can obscure understanding of concrete processes, e.g. models such as multiculturalism can blind us to actual processes and ways these models are working in practice.

⁴ Spencer, S. 2011. *The Migration Debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.

- 'Integrated society' is less helpful a concept than 'integration process' which leads to a focus on the factors which shape that process, or processes across integration domains. Debate on multiculturalism versus assimilation also detracts from that key question.
- The models themselves are political. They tell us something important about the national history, political culture and current debate. Words have a history and a development. There is a resurgence of 'assimilation' to describe what we should do with immigrants.
- Racism, discrimination and violence are not new but resurging in more pernicious forms.
- In the 1950s the labour market, welfare state and trade unions were stronger. Public debate focused on inequalities in terms of labour not citizenship. Integration emerged in the 1980s and this context led the way for the first successes of some of the right wing parties. The emergence of integration could be seen as the first indication that societies were becoming divided.
- Strong liberal political traditions have made us complacent on the shifting nature of identity politics. It is becoming more powerful and differences are increasingly framed in terms of values. It is easy and more acceptable to say 'they don't have our values'.
- There is a difference between promoting citizenship and promoting integration. E.g. in the USA, there are 8 million people who could be citizens but are not: providing citizenship for them is an easier political conversation than the more thorny issue of integration.
- There are manifold barriers to promoting a common European integration policy or European citizenship policy. Granting citizenship is in the very code of state sovereignty. Their history shapes their conditions for providing citizenship. We cannot isolate integration issues from the political context of each of the countries and of Europe.
- A large data gap is longitudinal research. It is also not clear what outcomes should be used to measure integration and therefore research is not easily comparable between and across States. It is difficult to measure some integration outcomes such as belonging. Belonging, in particular, is not a linear process; and those who strongly identify with a country may also be the most critical. So sophisticated qualitative research methods are needed.

Intercultural cities: making diversity work

Irena Guidikova, Head of Division, World Forum for Democracy, Intercultural Cities Programme, Council of Europe

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation addressed the value of the intercultural model, and its implications. 'Interculturalism' is seen as a positive alternative concept to 'integration':

- 'Integration' is identified with migrants, and a deficit model, rectifying what they lack. It leads to welfare provision and programmes. Interculturalism focuses on what migrants bring, as people with resources, not deficits to be resourced. That starting point leads to a different place.
- Integration policies target migrants not the rest of society: with interculturalism the focus is on the relationship: the 'software' of integration; the psychology, not only rights and law.
- Integration is an asymmetric relationship, of pity, fear, curiosity, threat, victimhood – which does not offer the right basis for policy. Interculturalism emphasises similarities and cultural reciprocity.



Irena Guidikova, Head of Division, World Forum for Democracy, Intercultural Cities Programme, Council of Europe

Yet interculturalism is not ideal terminology: too greater a focus is placed on culture, and it sounds like multiculturalism. 'Diversity' is a useful term - it detracts from the idea of people on the move. An approach based on solidarity of place rather than routes or trajectories that migrants embarked on before arriving, and their legal/irregular status. The focus is how to make it work; bring out benefits that outweigh the problems.

The role of integration professionals should be to find out what aspirations migrants have and to help them find a path to achieve their goals; as well as to promote the economic benefits of migration and diversity. The first thing to agree on is progressive values and then that consensus can be built upon. There is a business case but also a moral case for inclusion.

There are a number of constraints to interculturalism in Europe:

- European societies are unsure what their values are.
- Spatial ghettos exist which create insurmountable obstacles to interculturalism. More recent migration countries in Europe seem to be avoiding creating ghettos and should be vigilant to avoid segregation by mapping where it might emerge and acting quickly to create activities between neighbourhoods or urban regeneration for mixed neighbourhoods.
- More opportunities are needed for migrants to assume roles in local and national power structures.
- Myth busting programmes are needed at local and national level to inform public opinion and increase willingness to share space.

It is important to build in monitoring tools – the Intercultural Cities programme provides benchmarks, policy briefs and a network of more than 100 cities for peer learning. Research on impact is limited but there are correlations with positive outcomes on public safety, attitudes and discrimination.

Discussion

The discussion focussed on the operation and outcomes of the Intercultural Cities programme:

- The Intercultural Cities Index, compulsory for participating cities, is a tool which measures and illustrates the progress of each city on a range of indicators relating to intercultural integration, motivating action where gaps are identified, and enabling comparison with other cities. It was trialled in a few cities before being rolled out.
- Joining the programme has to be a decision of the city council. Each city has a contact point. The process leads to cities having a vision, dialogue across departments, and a strategy.
- Non-governmental partners such as trade unions, teachers, inter-faith networks and businesses are regularly engaged in the process.
- The programme has not reached below small cities to smaller authorities or rural areas.

Ramon Sanahuja, Director of Immigration and Interculturality, City of Barcelona

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

Read the case study [here](#)

The presentation focused on the significance for Barcelona of having adopted the intercultural model and its underlying principles, in the context of the city's migration history and national policy.

Integration policy making needs a joined up approach. It engages a wide range of departments and levels of governance. The national and regional levels are inextricably linked; however, policy is made in silos and implications are often not thought through. For example, family migration policy at national level restricts what state actors can do at a local level. Migrants may become angry, disengaged and 'excluded' from mainstream society. The solution is to work together at all levels. Fora are needed that span European, national, regional and local levels that enable good local practices to be seen at higher levels. This would enable effective practices to be rolled out more widely.

Barcelona uses the framework of interculturality. Policies encourage interaction between individuals and promote settings where it is more likely to happen. It is a high density city that experienced significant migration levels until economic crisis increased unemployment, budget cuts and evictions. It could have led to tensions with migrants as the scapegoats but politicians did not blame migrants. Polls show the percentage perceiving migrants as problem has declined; social cohesion has not been disrupted. The intercultural policy contributed to this.



Ramon Sanahuja, Director of Immigration and Interculturality, City of Barcelona

Political leadership is the key to a successful strategy. Migration issues per se were taken out of the debate, as divisive, with a shift in focus towards living together in diversity. This approach does not just celebrate diversity but concretely acts on this commitment through policy development. Interactions built a common sense of belonging.

Interculturalism has three core principles: equality, diversity and interaction. Each is reflected in action taken; and all initiatives examined to ensure they reflect these principles. The principles can conflict (e.g. equality must respect diversity) so no group should be dominant, but nor can any succeed without the other (e.g. positive interaction without equality): a balance is needed between all three.

In practice, the city has a welcoming programme, equal access to services and programmes, avoids residential segregation, has an anti-rumour strategy and does no inter-cultural activities – rather ensuring that mainstream activities are inclusive. This includes addressing the issue of irregular migrants and their registration in the city. Civil society is centrally involved, reaching people the authority cannot.

Discussion

A case-study group activity explored the implications of applying this model to a hypothetical situation in which participants played the role of advisor to the Mayor. There was no one, right, answer. Discussion focused on the challenge of addressing all three principles of interculturality and the balance between them:

- If action were taken that benefitted the business interests and celebrated the cultural heritage of one community in the city, it would be important to ensure that it also encouraged interaction beyond that group; while the equality principle meant other communities might equally need to be supported.
- The wishes and interests of other local residents in an area need to be considered – equality is also important for them.

- It is important to consider the diversity *within* a minority community and whether all will benefit from a proposed initiative, or only those who have promoted it.
 - If a proposal could not meet all three principles, alternative means to achieve the same objectives could be considered.
 - Beyond satisfying the three principles, as the bottom line, broader benefits to the city could be considered.
-



Participants take a walking tour around Oxford on Tuesday afternoon

Wednesday morning 7th September – Integration policies at the national level

Chair: Elizabeth Collett, Director, MPI Europe

Recent trends in national integration policies and their significance

Thomas Huddleston, Policy Analyst, MIPEX report, Migration Policy Group

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation reviewed the main trends in national policies revealed in the MIPEX report in relation to the labour market, education, language and civic orientation, family reunion, anti-discrimination, naturalisation and permanent residence.

A long-term perspective is needed for effective policy making. The current focus on newcomers, whilst important, should not distract integration policymakers. Three quarters of migrants have been in Europe for more than five years. Improvements are needed in many policy areas.

The quicker migrants access the labour market, using their skills, the quicker the integration process. The most crucial determining factor for migrants' ability to find employment is labour market conditions. Other factors are education (especially if in new country of residence), language skills and age. Statistics show refugees rarely undertake life-long learning even though this might be the most effective way to gain employment.

There is an unmet need for language courses. Some countries require language skills but do not provide sufficient places. It is also important to evaluate the quality of language courses and levels of fluency obtained. Education ministries are slow to change despite clear evidence on what is needed. Some have no policies for migrant pupils, who are disproportionately in disadvantaged schools.

An area where all EU States are failing is anti-discrimination. Despite being enshrined in fundamental rights and EU law there has been little movement in national practices. Only recently are these laws understood by lawyers and judges. Resources are needed for more effective implementation. Family reunification is ignored as a major lever for integration, especially for children. Rather, restrictions are growing in many countries.

Statistics show naturalisation boosts political and labour market participation, and reporting of discrimination. It also increases the social integration outcomes for refugees and vulnerable groups. Yet there are variable rates of citizenship among the long settled and second generation. Many are 'permanently temporary', whom employers are less likely to employ. Permanent residence should be promoted to increase integration outcomes.

The MIPEX report shows strong integration policies correlate with positive attitudes to migrants. Integration is becoming a priority for many more local and regional governments and is also a priority in national debates - but barriers remain:

- Integration support can be seen as a pull factor.
- A belief that many recent arrivals will return and therefore an unwillingness to invest in the integration of those who may leave.
- Insufficient mechanisms to operationalise multi-level governance on integration policy.
- There are voluntary initiatives but they are not always fit for developing multi-scalar policies.
- There is little knowledge about what is going on at the local and regional level besides 'good practice' examples in cities and large urban areas.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the politics of commitment to, and backsliding from, integration policies at the national level; on the targets of integration policies and priority policy areas:

- The shock of the 'refugee crisis' might be mobilised in order to persuade institutions to invest in this area.
- The fear of creating a 'pull factor' is a real barrier to for national governments. Pull factors operate differently across Europe; e.g. in Southern European countries there are few migrants who claim asylum but rather choose to enter the labour market.
- Prime Ministers' offices are taking greater interest in integration. This is providing opportunities for those working on these issues for a long time to put different options on the table. However, the politicised nature of the debate and 'unhealthy dynamic' evident in the growth of populism means investing in migrant integration may not be seen as politically viable.
- It can be difficult to persuade politicians to act because civil servants do not know how to benchmark integration strategies. Monitoring tools may not have been incorporated into policies at the outset so there is no evidence base through which to build an argument. MIPEX and other evaluation databases are not part of the culture in most countries. Despite agreement that testing new strategies is a good thing, there is aversion to being perceived as 'failing'.
- A barrier to gaining consensus on action in this area is the long-term nature of the integration process – which is often unattractive for politicians in an environment hostile to migrants. An integration policy requires at least 5 or 10 years to assess whether it has been successful or not.
- Cost is a further reason why effective integration programmes targeted to meet needs are not introduced, despite evidence on positive outcomes. Integration is a process, not a project, which is a miss-match with short term funding often allocated to it.
- It is difficult to innovate or pilot new approaches in this political climate. Politicians turn to symbolic measures rather than delivery of long term outcomes. Voluntary and private sector innovation is developing, but in silos, not inclusively and not well informed. New fora for cooperation and learning exchange could address this.
- Many integration policies are not aimed at asylum seekers, only considered appropriate from the moment of recognition of a protection claim. However, asylum seekers may spend months or even years in a country without access to support. For effective integration, policies need to start from the moment of arrival.
- States are not good at some elements of integration, e.g. at changing education structures or promoting quick access to the labour market. Effective integration means persuading Ministries to act.
- Promoting language learning is unanimously agreed as important across the political spectrum; but there is a diversity of language learning policies, focusing on short term provision, and an expectation that NGOs provide. Easy access to high quality language learning would benefit the whole society and promote faster access to the job market.
- There is a need to move beyond traditional models of service provision to consider alternative models of public-private funding and provision.
- Family reunification is the turning point when individuals decide to invest in their future in the new country; and allows one spouse to access the labour market.
- Many of the 30% of the recent refugees whose claims are rejected will not leave. There needs to be a realistic plan for these people. They will congregate in cities and the municipality will be forced to act.

- The cost of regularising legal status and applying for citizenship is out of reach for most migrants and refugees. NGOs are effective, and could play a greater role, in encouraging and supporting applications. Citizenship and participation is missing from most integration strategies in Europe.
- We need to challenge the assumption that integration will happen naturally for the second generation.

National policies: challenges and opportunities

Ylva Johansson, Minister for Employment and Integration, Sweden

Presentation

Read the text of the presentation [here](#)

In 2015, Sweden received more asylum seekers per capita than ever recorded in an OECD country. Over 40 percent were under the age of 18. 35,000 were unaccompanied minors.

The Minister's presentation ([full text](#)) set out the Government's response to that challenge, that of the Swedish public, and concern about the lack of solidarity from other EU Member States. She explained the logistical challenges arising from the need to meet the needs of so many people in a short time, and the impact on the migration debate in the country.

That led to changes in national policy towards asylum seekers which, it is hoped, will be temporary. Majority public attitudes remain positive and spontaneous initiatives from a cross section of society have complemented support provided by the state. The presentation addressed the timing of integration measures from point of arrival, the priority areas and the role of municipalities and their relationship to national policies.



Elizabeth Collett, MPI, and Ylva Johansson, Minister for Employment and Integration, Sweden

Discussion

The discussion focused on coordination across tiers of government, on EU solidarity, on building education capacity and future scenarios:

- Responsibility is delegated to municipalities which are resourced and trusted to deliver. Within government an earlier decision not to have Ministerial responsibility for integration, because a whole government responsibility, was revisited to ensure senior Ministerial leadership on priorities across government.
- The national state pays refugee income for two years; those who benefit, including women, being required to take part in programmes that facilitate access to work.
- There is an imbalance in the EU with States accepting political support from other Members in past when they needed it but now not providing support to refugee-receiving States.
- Recently retired teachers can be incentivised to return to fill vacancies and have responded to the call to help, while refugee teachers are being fast tracked into teaching posts.
- The worst outcome would be segregation and loss of confidence in the future; the best would be embracing demographic and social change positively.

- Support for far right party presents other parties with a challenge – whether to collaborate or distance themselves and present the public with clear choices.

Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration, Portugal

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation addressed recent patterns of migration and then focused on Portugal's strategic plan for migration and integration – its core elements, multi-level governance, key initiatives and measures of success.

Portugal witnessed a small decline in population with emigration and has spare housing and school places, in contrast to Sweden. There are inflows of labour migrants, international students, retired people and refugees, but fewer than Portugal wanted: just 500 when places were agreed for 10,000, a small number in a population of 10 million.

Foreigners have high integration into the labour market (70 percent) and are creating jobs for nationals. Since 2002 migrants have made a positive contribution to social security. In 2015 migrants were a net contributor of 300 million euros. A new nationality law was passed in 2007. More than 400,000 former migrants have become Portuguese since 2009.



Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration, Portugal

There is a crisis of solidarity among EU member states, not of migration. The Portuguese integration strategy is a long term plan: a 20 year policy that began in 1996 and is safeguarded from changes in the government. It is seen as structural and remains an area of strong consensus. The strategy works at multiple levels and there is a direct and close relationship between the state and municipalities. Indicators on integration were built in from the outset, so there is a strong evidence base through which to design policy.

Policy making is undertaken by a public agency – the High Commission on Migration – and based on evidence and outcomes. The Commission reports annually on outcomes, including labour market integration. Politicians can draw on this to counter right wing views. It provides strong 'headlines' backed up with rigorous research. The report has a high profile and is presented at Parliament. A shorter report, with key headline information, is sent to municipalities and public institutions such as schools.

In 2014, Ministers cooperated to create a new strategy for 2015 -2020, coordinated by the High Commission, agreeing on 106 practical measures. Municipalities are engaged across its five axes:

- Coordination of migration flows
- Migrant integration
- Social inclusion of immigrant descendants
- Quality of the quality of migration services
- Connection and support to emigrants.

Portugal has had one-stop-shops for migrant integration since 2004 (3 national, 58 local), which have had four million attendances. Many different programmes take place from these institutions including a hotline for immigrants *and* emigrants.

All municipalities were invited to develop their own strategic integration plan. This form of multilevel governance proves very effective. The national level sets the framework but municipalities decide on strategic goals and design the plan. The Commission also created a MIPEX tool for municipalities so they can set their own benchmarks. These initiatives are all based on participation.

Success factors are:

- A strong notion of reciprocity - treating immigrants in way that want our emigrants to be treated.
- Political leadership and consensus.
- Emphasis on the benefits of migration.
- Public opinion is on the side of integration and refugees.
- Multi-level governance and partnerships.

Discussion

The discussion focused on modes of engagement with civil society; the gap between Portugal's willingness to take refugees and the number that have arrived; career progression of migrants; and emergence of support for the far right:

- Portugal has a Migrant Forum, defined by law, in which forty organisations are included. It meets every two months and has sub-groups that work on particular issues. This provides one part of the framework civil society needs for effective engagement.
- There is a fast track programme into the labour market which relies on recognition, certification and validation of migrant's skills and qualifications.
- There is a right-wing party but it has no seat in Parliament. This may be attributed to the large number of Portuguese emigrants and the consensus around reciprocity.
- Willingness to take refugees, in the absence of an effective EU relocation mechanism, could be addressed by bilateral arrangements with receiving States.
- Prevention measures to stem numbers risking the Mediterranean crossing should be the first priority.
- Coordination with municipalities at administrative level rather than with Mayors de-politicises the arrangements. Municipalities are advised who is arriving on a particular day, and High Commission staff visit to facilitate the process.

Wednesday afternoon 7th September – Focus on refugees

Chair: Michael Diedring, Director, EPIM

Refugee economies: forced displacement and development

Alex Betts, Director, Refugee Study Centre, University of Oxford

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

90 percent of the world's refugees are outside Europe, concentrated in areas neighbouring refugee producing countries. Hence the question is how to foster integration with few resources. The

presentation considered whether successful pathways in these regions could have lessons for European states.

Access to jobs and markets in the temporary or, ideally, long-term is key. This is consistent with the Geneva Convention which stresses autonomy of refugees; but most of the world's refugees are denied the right to work and to freedom of movement. The current refugee system erodes human capital by leaving people in exile.



Research is exploring why some refugees do better than others; the conditions under which people thrive. Uganda, e.g., allows work and freedom of movement, *without* humanitarian assistance. Refugees are given access to plots of land. Informal networks also promote integration, supporting peer to peer

learning and providing opportunities for economic activity. Some thrive, some survive. Elsewhere, camps provide humanitarian assistance but no opportunity to engage economically; or there is urban destitution, or dangerous journeys to new destinations.

Data is needed on which to base strong policies – but most migration data is not disaggregated by immigration status. Economic data on the lives of refugees would help make the case for providing job opportunities. This is a key development issue for European Member States.

Rather than resettling refugees in places that do not fit their capacities or needs they could be given a preference ranking and degree of choice. Governments need to think strategically about resettlement and promote conditions for economic integration over time. Contrast the USA, which leaves many people on their own after a short period time, and Canada's sponsorship model - more successful for long term economic integration.

Learnings for future policy:

- It should focus on capacities, not vulnerabilities, costs or burdens.
- Aim for refugee autonomy, not dependency; and development not just humanitarianism.
- Preference matching – match refugee destinations to the need for the capacities they have.
- Prioritise education and jobs.
- Different models will work in different contexts.

Discussion

The discussion focused on access to jobs, political leadership, preference-matching and self-reliance versus humanitarian support:

- Providing asylum seekers with work can create tensions in the host community. If allowed to work there is a backlash from the media that they are taking jobs from 'natives'. An alternative, allowing work but with lower earnings and protection, would create unfair competition and a

secondary labour market. So there is a tension between economic rationale and politics, globalisation and democracy.

- A solution is to find interventions that benefit refugees and the host community. To reconcile the economics and the politics, other residents should be targeted by initiatives as well to create a different narrative about job creation. Economists able to do that analysis need to be part of the story.
- Economic integration of refugees in Europe, where skills may not meet employers' expectations, is harder than in neighbouring first countries of asylum. Refugees can gain jobs by replacing natives, formalising work that takes place in the informalised economy or in new jobs. A substantial investment is needed to absorb refugee labour and invest in retraining programmes.
- Preference matching is currently being trialled in the UK Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme and in the Netherlands, where outcomes are being monitored.
- A conclusion that refugees do better if they rely on their own resources than if they receive humanitarian support could be interpreted to conflict with the European welfare model. But they only do better in the right conditions, where able to access jobs and markets. Create those conditions and reliance on welfare is reduced.

Integration of Refugees into Language, Training and Work

Wolfgang Müller, Managing Director, German Federal Employment Agency

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation focused on Germany's distinct approach to fostering integration into the labour market. Germany has 500,000 new workers. Designing a labour market integration programme on this scale, especially in a short time (in contrast to earlier refugee arrivals), brings challenges as well as opportunities.

The problem of integration policy making is working in different silos and over different time frames. A comprehensive cost calculation should take place across different departments but this is difficult to achieve.

There has been a high willingness of employers to hire refugees. However, there are barriers to this in Germany where there are strong procedures regarding certificates and qualifications; and there are not enough vacancies. The role of the social partners and trade unions is crucial. Those under 30 are easiest to retrain. There have also been gender issues: men unwilling to have women as their teacher or boss or to see wives and daughters receive training.

A key issue from the German perspective is that integration has to start immediately from the day of arrival. However, in Germany, there is a clear sequence: e.g. refugees do not have job training before they have learnt the language.

There is an absolute principle of non-discrimination: no drop below the minimum wage despite requests to do this from some companies. It would be hugely controversial. The goal is not just any job as that can lead to long term unemployment. Nevertheless many are in temporary or low level jobs.



Wolfgang Müller, Managing Director, German Federal Employment Agency

There is a focus on speeding up the determination procedure to get a decision within six months. Resourcing language and skills training and work for someone who may not be allowed to stay is never a waste but with capacity issues is it better to target those who will stay?

Germany has a decentralised decision making structure. The Länder have a great deal of authority. Germany also has the biggest civil society in Europe but the national level does not monitor this activity. It does not collect data on regional or local civil society action. Thus there is little opportunity for multi-level governance.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the costs and benefits of labour market activation programmes, the challenge of addressing gender issues and EU cooperation:

- With strong political leadership labour market integration can be presented to the public in terms of their benefits to the labour market, and the costs if *not* integrated. Often the debate focuses on positive return of investment rather than the non-cost of integration: a young person without training will cost a lot more over a decade than training at the outset. With this focus the balance sheet between cost and positive return looks very different.
- Gender issues can be addressed but the belief some men hold that they will be dishonoured if taught be a woman is strongly felt, with some even leaving a room when the teacher enters.
- Labour market services across Member States share information and ideas through an institutionalised grouping and there is a specific group focused on the integration of migrants.

Refugee resettlement in Canada

Sharon Chomyn, Canadian High Commission, London

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation focused on Canada's refugee programmes in the context of its overall approach to immigration, and in particular its private sponsorship scheme because of the new interest in that model in Europe.

Canada is a country that is made up of immigrants. 200 languages are spoken in its schools and the population has an increasing non-Christian affiliation. Immigration is within the direct experience of most people or indirectly through members of their family, which affects attitudes to immigration. All parties are pro-immigration. There is high political participation of immigrants.



Canada produces an immigration plan every year involving various levels of government and extensive consultation e.g. with municipalities and service providers. The plan divides immigrant intake into economic migrants; family reunification and refugees. 23% is refugee resettlement, higher than in previous years primarily because of the Syrian intake. There are

discussions to expand the annual plan to a multi-year plan.

Refugee programming takes place across three streams:

- Government sponsored refugees referred by UNHCR.
- Privately sponsored refugees.
- A hybrid system since 2011 of sponsorship with government support.

Of 30K Syrians since November 2015, 54% were government sponsored, 36% privately sponsored and 10% hybrid. They have gone to over 300 destinations. Media coverage has been positive. Language and education skills present a challenge. More than half are under 14 years of age.

The sponsorship scheme dates back to the resettlement of Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s. A downturn in the economy led to hesitancy to resettle refugees but there was a ground swell of public support. The Government pledged to match sponsors: for every refugee sponsored it would take one refugee. In three years 60,000 refugees had been resettled with very good outcomes.

Different groups of people sponsor refugees. 'Sponsorship agreement holders' tend to be faith based, humanitarian, or ethno cultural groups. They sponsor hundreds of refugees a year. Family members can also sponsor. In the 'Group of 5' sponsorship system at least 5 people make an agreement to sponsor one refugee. All sponsors have to be Canadian, have no criminal record, and have a detailed settlement plan on how they are going to support the refugee or refugee family. Those sponsored must meet the criteria for refugee status.

There are challenges:

- Finance – currently a review as to whether refugees are given sufficient support to begin a new life.
- Sponsorship relationship breakdown, albeit rare, and can be because the refugee leaves area.
- Fraud/programme integrity, e.g. a refugee may fund the sponsorship, despite measures to prevent this.
- Processing times (for example, demand from Syrians has been too quick for sponsors' preparation).

The recent, hybrid approach accommodates a group of citizens who want to participate but do not already know an individual refugee to sponsor. A portal was created where refugees recognised by UNHCR could be posted. They receive 6 month's financial support from the government and 6 month's from the sponsors. Refugees then become eligible for mainstream municipality support.

Integration is seen as a project for society as a whole. There are partnerships between levels of government and a large number of non-governmental actors. All migrants have access to settlement services, provided by 500 service providers. The budget is \$900m.

A Resettlement Assistance Programme provides welcome at the airport, temporary accommodation, orientation, a register of services and help to get housing and work.

Refugees have the highest rate of citizenship compared to other migrant groups. They report they are satisfied or highly satisfied with their lives in Canada. They have the same voting rates as native Canadians. Privately sponsored refugees are quicker to become self-sufficient than other migrants and refugees and have higher rates of university completion.

Response: Could private sponsorship work in Europe?

Catherine Woollard, Secretary General, ECRE

Private sponsorship currently has limited application in Europe. For the few pilots in place it is too early to report on outcomes. The scheme is not an answer to spontaneous arrivals, which will continue due to Europe's geographical location; but is a way to capitalise on public support and spontaneous volunteer movements before they dissipate, and to engage diaspora groups. Private sponsorship could also be attractive to the private sector where good will needs to be directed to meet current needs.

European Member States can be grouped into three categories in relation to preconditions for a private sponsorship programme.

- Private sponsorship is feasible where there is a large and active civil society (as partners if not sponsors); a strong history of integration and hence infrastructure of support; and affluence; as in the UK, Netherlands and Denmark.
- It may also be feasible in countries with large numbers of refugees, like Germany and Sweden.
- If implemented in countries which are welcoming but not current major destinations, e.g. Estonia and Portugal, it could make the country more attractive as a destination of choice.

There are prospects for this approach to solve some resettlement issues in Europe; but caution should be exercised as some countries do not meet the preconditions. There is also a dearth of evidence about private sponsorship on which to base policy.

There are also obstacles to the preference matching system of resettlement. Preference should not be given to countries which cooperate on repatriation and return, or those who block irregular migration routes. We need to ensure a programme does not penalise or stigmatise irregular routes. Selection criteria could be misused. Settlement must be needs based.

Discussion

Discussion focused on the detailed operation of the Canadian sponsorship system and its outcomes:

- The programme does get tweaked periodically in response to feedback and politicians' views.
- There was concern that the private sponsorship programme could operate as an extension of family reunion but an interview process ensures the integrity of the programme. There are clear rules on how to privately fund a refugee. There is a lot of guidance and monitoring.
- There is also a multi-layered consultation process, including through email and social media. Not everyone agrees with the programme but there is so much positive reporting in the media, including success stories that those voices are in a minority.
- There was limited evaluation of the programme in the past because not felt necessary. The high profile nature of the Syrian crisis means there will be more procedures to build an evidence base for easy replication.



Participants punting on the Cherwell

Thursday morning 8th September - Integration Policy at the Local Level

Chair: Professor Michael Keith, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford

Refugees, Integration and the Case of Vienna

Natasha Strobl, on behalf of Sonja Wehsely, Executive City Councillor for Public Health, Social Affairs and Generations, Vienna

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

View the associated infographic [here](#)

Vienna was a diverse city with population growth before the refugee arrivals in 2015. The presentation focused on its response to the unprecedented number of arrivals in September of that year and longer term integration strategy.

In September 2015 refugees arrived in the city from Hungary in large numbers. The city council quickly established a panel of local political actors, rail and military authorities and emergency services to provide medical care, food and accommodation. Fast and flexible provision was made for those wishing to claim asylum in Austria and those in transition to neighbouring EU countries. Coordination was by a panel of authorities, not one agency, guided by the emergency services.

It occurred during an election campaign for the city council election on 10 October; a city with a presence of the far right party then with majority support nationally. Even in the social democratic party there were concerns about how to respond but the leadership was clear that refugees must not be left at the border but given assistance.

Refugees were brought from the border into the city. The train station was the central hub for medical attention, shelter and food so an emergency camp was established there. Those who wanted to stay in Austria were taken to shelters. 300,000 travelled through Vienna, with 1.2m overnight stays, and use of 65 shelters, over two months. Others stayed in private homes.

Many will get refugee status and stay in the city so it needs to provide longer term quarters. All city districts provided accommodation regardless of politics. The city council took responsibility for unaccompanied minors.

The city's approach is to support integration from arrival, not wait for a decision on refugee status. Integration can only be fostered through proactivity, it does not happen by itself, and a divisive anti-refugee dialogue runs counter to the interests of the city with a diverse community. Key elements of the process are:

- Equalised dispersal of new arrivals across the city to prevent the marginality caused by the clustering of refugees in select quarters and districts.
- A specialised programme on arrival, [Start Vienna](#), providing language courses and orientation (very popular) including specific classes for refugee women and literacy skills if required. It provides a face-to-face meeting with a councillor to evaluate education and employment needs; issues transport cards and advises on welfare entitlement and the laws and customs of Austria.
- Children are quickly started in school or kindergarten.
- A programme for 15-21 year olds provides additional language courses in German and English and vocational training.

- No eligibility for work but the opportunity to do community work. 200 refugees are currently doing that for the city administration. The daily routine and language use facilitate integration. An allowance is provided for work done.

The city was helped by having a very large public sector. It did not need to consider the impact on profit margins e.g. on the railways. Civil society played a major role in supporting the municipal efforts. Volunteers flooded in to help, coordination facilitated by new apps and social media. This help was very important, but the city council saw it as its own primary responsibility.

Cities as Incubators of Integration

Anu Riila, Chair, Eurocities Migration and Integration Working Group, and City of Helsinki

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation introduced the work of the Eurocities working group and then focused on the key issues for European cities that have arisen from the refugee crisis and longer term integration of migrants, and on what cities need from other actors.

While cities are not always in the same situation, they face similar challenges in the reception and integration of new arrivals. The EUROcities working group on migration and integration brings together practitioners for information sharing and mutual support, and to influence EU policies from a city perspective.

The network's objective is to highlight the important role that local government should play in multilevel governance structures and shift the focus of EU legislation in a way which allows cities to tackle strategic challenges at the local level.

In 2015 cities played a major role in the refugee emergency, some having to manage without government support. They lacked data on refugees that would have enabled forward planning. Communication proved very important including through the press to promote a welcoming atmosphere. Volunteers and private initiatives provided an additional resource (some funded by cities), but there was also a rise in anti-migrant groups and hate speech.



Anu Riila, Eurocities Working Group on Migration and Integration, presenting

A fast-track to education was key for children; and affordable housing for those remaining – but some districts in cities were reluctant to provide it, forcing people to stay in reception centres. Rapid access to the labour market was a common priority.

Cities fill gaps left by government and EU inaction. The refugee crisis, which took some cities beyond their legal mandate in service provision, has focused attention on their long term role in fostering integration and the new partners with whom they should work.

Key issues for cities:

- Political leadership and solidarity within and between cities.
- Recognition that integration work is primarily at the local level and cities need to be involved in decision making of higher tiers – national and EU.
- Recognition that some decisions at those levels have a detrimental effect on integration; and that integration is a long term process which has costs and needs a sustained infrastructure.
- A need for a new fora/means of cooperation at EU level for cities to engage directly on policy, and connect all cities to their national EU integration contact point. Direct EU funding to cities, not via national governments which can have different priorities, is needed for the long term process of integration.

Discussion

The discussion focussed on the distinct role of cities and other municipalities and the necessity of multi-level governance arrangements; on the role of civil society and on the challenging political and economic context in which cities have to deliver:

- The economic crisis and its implications for public sector budgets and for public opinion is an over-riding context in which cities are operating. The impact of national papers that are hostile to refugees marginalises coverage of the ground swell of positive public responses.
- Cities and civil society, which play such a key role, need to be given a say in national and EU policy development, which impacts significantly on their work. EU AMIF funding has an expectation that governments will consult stakeholders, but structures are needed to make that work. Where structures exist for dialogue with civil society at local, regional and national level, including representation of migrant communities, they are tier specific and not joined up.
- Realignment may need to go further, in redistribution of roles, obligations and share of the budget. A new 'integration pact' clarifying the roles and relationships between the local, national, EU and their respective relationships towards civil society would support improved decision making and funding models for emergency responses and longer term integration strategies. Attention should be given to the quality and structures of horizontal and vertical dialogue to promote ongoing multi-level governance.
- In countries such as the Netherlands integration is mainstreamed across departments at city level more than at national level, ironically making multi-level governance more difficult. Yet Amsterdam has taken the lead in the new Urban Agenda on migration.
- For cities with strong welfare provision, acknowledging the importance of NGO provision and the need to incorporate it within an overarching integration strategy has been difficult and communication insufficient. Cities do not want to privatise their welfare role.
- When cities were forced to exceed their mandates to be able to respond in the emergency it opened up national debates on roles and appropriate delegation. In Germany this led to legislative reform.
- Cities have not all taken the same stance towards refugees and migrants, each having different geography, politics and policy positions. We should not assume a uniform voice (nor across cities between districts). There is a difference between large cities and smaller municipalities with less experience of migration. Some have not welcomed a role in supporting refugees nor want a voice

in national policy. Would participation in long term multi-level governance on integration change that?

- City engagement with NGOs is not unproblematic. NGOs do not represent all civil society voices. Public administrations are run by accountable, elected representatives and therefore have a different remit. NGOs have their own agendas and different ways of working. NGOs and municipalities can each benefit from working together (though some NGOs prefer not), but have different roles and responsibilities.
- Some see integration as a national state responsibility – it should not cede responsibility to cities. Rather there should be a Memorandum of Understanding with those cities that cooperate with governments on joint programmes.
- The governance challenge is thus not just about efficiency of state institutions but relationships within and between them, and with non-public bodies. Recognising their key roles but also economic, geographic and political differences, must be the starting point for discussion.

Welcoming Cities- Innovations from the US

Monica Fuentes, Director, Washington DC Office, Welcoming America

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

The presentation focused on learning from *Welcoming America*, a national non-profit organisation in the USA which since 2009 has been supporting innovative and inclusive grassroots movements to challenge the dominant negative rhetoric on migration and create individual city identities which embrace diversity. The fast growing movement has appealed to cities with different demographics, local economies and histories of migration. One in eight Americans now lives in a ‘welcoming city’.

The USA has a growing foreign-born population. One in four children has a migrant background or is a child of migrant parents. This diversity is not only in those states with a long history of migration.

The movement is informed by four concepts:

- **Seed and Soil:** the immigrant is the seed, the receiving community the soil. The focus is not solely the needs of the foreign-born but on community-building and fostering relationships. Preparing and equipping communities to manage this change, watering the soil, is critical to the full participation of migrants in the social, civic and economic fabric of their new city. Communities are taken from fearfulness, past tolerance, to welcoming. Leaders of local government, business, education and NGOs are engaged in an **advisory group** – crucial to success - that identifies action needed and leads it, together identifying new approaches; coupled with communications on common values, leadership, contact and communication. It starts with a closed door conversation to explore options.
- **Infrastructure:** investment in infrastructure and coordination of a web of policies and programmes to ensure migrants are able to reach their potential; not as a response to a crisis, but as a way to operate long term. *Welcoming America* has been working closely with Mayors to demonstrate the value of making existing priorities and initiatives more inclusive, and encouraging leadership to



Monica Fuentes, Director,
Washington DC Office, Welcoming
America

project consistent positive messages on the value of migrants in the community. E.g. Atlanta, Georgia: they created a 20 point plan from a 20 member advisory committee, accepted by the Mayor and implemented by a unit in the administration and through public and private agencies in creative ways.

- **Competitive Advantage:** Emphasising narratives around the creation of communities where all can thrive can become a means for survival, prosperity and global competitive edge. Narratives are distinct to each city, taking into account historical heritage and economic position. Measures can also be employed to promote migrant entrepreneurship along with those of other residents and retention of foreign-born graduates.
- **Tipping Point:** this idea focusses on the stage at which residents are more welcoming than not; in an inclusive nation in which all people have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential and live fulfilling lives in their communities, expanding prosperity and well-being for all Americans.

To maximise the impact of the network *Welcoming America* is currently developing a formalised membership structure and piloting certification to incentivise a welcoming approach.

Response: Could this approach work in Europe?

Discussion led by Arjen Werweij, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Netherlands; and Anu Riila, Chair, Eurocities Working Group on Migration and Integration.

The discussion focused on the implications of ways in which the US context differs from Europe and how a programme of this kind could nevertheless contribute:

- In the context of migration in Europe and of managing super-diversity, there is a lack of confidence in the state, public feelings of insecurity and less openness to being welcome which right wing parties exploit. There is a need for an instrument to change that but it must *enhance* the visibility of the local state's role not replace it, to rebuild that confidence.
- Municipalities are part of the solution but also currently part of the problem. The programme would need to work with municipalities to change them, not only external agencies. The authority must be seen to be caring and inclusive. Its affirmation of the rights of all migrants, including undocumented, is one sign. But it is right that cities are seen as the catalyst, not the controller.
- The US has a strong tradition of community organisation and mobilisation and a role for business in governance, in the context of weak municipalities. Does the decline in confidence in European cities suggest we need to shift, instead, to the US model?
- Individuals and agencies will have differing motivation for engaging. For business it is profit - but also corporate social responsibility, and place shaping. Some agencies are value driven. Faith leadership has been important in the US. It is important to identify what is the rationale of each actor to take part.
- The appointment of each member of the advisory group by the Mayor, personally, gives it the status it needs to attract senior people and be taken seriously internally and externally.
- Business has made huge profits from migration but when problems arise there is often an expectation that it is up to the state to resolve it. The *Welcoming America* approach makes them part of the solution. A shared responsibility. Agencies collectively taking ownership of the future of their own community.
- The ideal is for measures to lead to benefits for all residents, e.g. support for start-up businesses. This achieves economic benefits but also more positive attitudes.

- The approach takes the inter-cultural city principles beyond the municipality to other agencies: each has to ask itself if it is promoting equality, diversity and interaction. Are we being exclusionary and if so what can we do to rectify it?
- The 'welcoming' branding may not be appropriate in Europe for two reasons: immigrants do not want to be seen as newcomers; and few cities want to be seen as welcoming more people to come. If we re-think the branding, we can still take on board the approach: a coalition of the willing, led by the city administration as convenor and catalyst, to shift practice in the administration and elsewhere.

Civil Society experiences at the local level

Chair: Avila Kilmurray, Social Change Initiative; former Director, Community Foundation, Northern Ireland

Petra Hueck, Director, International Catholic Migration Commission, Europe; and Sabir Zazai, Director, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre and Chair, Cities of Sanctuary

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The presentation introduced the work of the SHARE network, exploring what it means in practice to provide 'a welcome' to newcomers and the importance of a structured context for volunteering. It introduced the City of Sanctuary movement in the UK; and learning from the work of one advice and support agency, the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, on the meaning of integration to migrants and their own priorities.

Across Europe, civil society and volunteers have played a central role in facilitating the reception and integration of refugees into local communities, and in enhancing the capacity and responsiveness of regional and local resettlement and integration programmes. Their efforts have made a significant contribution to alleviating the pressures of the crisis and to promoting cohesion at the local level. These grassroots movements to ensure the dignity and protection of migrants' human rights often do so under the pressure of anti-migrant politics and with little acknowledgement or structure to coordinate their contributions, leaving much of their potential unexplored.



Petra Hueck, Head of ICMC Europe, Brussels

Led by the International Catholic Migration Commission and co-financed by the European Commission, the [SHARE Network](#) has built a network of European regional, local authority and civil society partners involved in refugee resettlement: to share best practice and experience, facilitate resettlement locally, exchange information and learning and share creative and contextualised local resettlement solutions.

A key recommendation from the *SHARE* project was the promotion of more structured grassroots initiatives and volunteerism in providing welcome and integration services:

- Volunteering can support successful integration by enabling contact, and building mutual awareness and networks, between the settled community and refugees.

- For resettled refugees, who experience a rapid transition when they arrive, volunteers play a fundamental role in facilitating reception, adaptation and long-term settlement.
- Providing opportunities for refugees to volunteer contributes to their employability and creates a sphere in which they can learn and practice the language as well as the customs of their new country.

Volunteering requires a structured approach to deliver the greatest value. To support this, the *SHARE* network developed a benchmark: [Volunteering for Refugee Integration: A SHARE Network Toolkit Publication](#), to help cities and organisations assess and improve volunteering in a way that reflects the city's circumstances.

Evaluating the civil society landscape to identify how responsibilities are divided between NGOs and local authorities will support the monitoring and evaluation of their efficiency and quality of services, promote better governance at the local level and identify unaddressed gaps in support.

Providing welcome is twofold: practical assistance, such as housing, and the human factor of welcome and understanding. Investment in volunteer coordinators, databanks and training will promote the efficacy of volunteering; and also send clear messages on the value of volunteering as a worthwhile and beneficial activity which in turn will help build a culture of volunteering.



Sabir Zazai, Director, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre and Chair, Cities of Sanctuary

[City of Sanctuary](#) is a grassroots movement which promotes a culture of welcome and hospitality for migrants, particularly refugees. In 2007, Sheffield became the UK's first 'City of Sanctuary'. There have since been over 60 initiatives in towns and cities across the UK and Ireland, creating a network of local groups and volunteers committed to building welcome and inclusion in their area.

City of Sanctuary's focus reflects many of the indicators of integration. It has established 'streams of sanctuary' to support schools, universities, health and maternity services, theatres and arts centres, churches and other faith centres, sports, communities and businesses to become 'places of sanctuary'. The movement is

encouraging Members of Parliament to engage more with the resettlement process and take an active role in fostering a culture of hospitality towards refugees through the annual '[Sanctuary in Parliament](#)' event.

For migrants the core elements of integration are health, housing, language, education, employment, welfare benefits and social connections. The starting point for refugees is well-being and sense of security, a pre-requisite after the refugee experience; then social connections, and full integration. Securing a job so that no longer reliant on others is a key part of the process.

A series of barriers make the process more difficult: dispersal, destitution, detention, accommodation and reporting centres, and tighter immigration controls. There is also a damaging narrative of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' migrants that has emerged between different categories of migrant, including between resettled refugees and those who arrive independently. The message must be one of '*if refugees prosper, we all prosper*', demonstrating the value of inclusion.

Discussion

The discussion focused on ways in which multi-stakeholder cooperation frameworks can be strengthened to engage civil society more effectively, and the importance of its own networks:

- To capitalise on the enthusiasm and commitment of civil society its role needs to be given greater recognition, and given more support in shaping and delivering resettlement and integration services.
- Multi-stakeholder cooperation frameworks would be strengthened if they had a clearer common purpose and governance structure that recognises each partner's strengths and experiences. Focusing work in 'streams' would allow a specialist approach.
- Civil society and the private sector should be encouraged to retain a level of autonomy to develop new innovative approaches less likely to emerge from state authorities.
- Acknowledging the important role of civil society in the immediate and long term response to migratory flows should not absolve the public sector of their responsibilities or enable a lack of accountability on the part of national governments or the EU to generate solutions.
- Better use of formal and informal consultation mechanisms should not only promote civil society voices in national debate but bring national policy makers to the local level to promote their understanding of challenges on the ground.
- There is a need to strengthen civil society actors' capacity to feed into national debate as they often have insufficient resource to engage. This silences positive voices at the local level, allowing resettlement and migration narratives to be controlled by more divisive contributions.
- Civil society networks that allow for knowledge sharing and identification of local issues play a vital role.

Funding Civil Society to Foster Integration- What should be our priorities?

Chair: Padraic Quirk, Social Change Initiative.

A panel discussion led by Jake Lee, Unbound Philanthropy; Otilie Bălz, Robert Bosch Foundation; Michael Diedring, EPIM; and Andreas Hieronymus, Open Society Foundation.

The refugee crisis has led to some rethinking by charitable foundations on the best use of funding to achieve their aims. In the face of prominent challenges such as: the curtailment of migrants' rights, the condemnation of the 'migrant' figure in public debate and reduced resources for civil society, the identification of priorities is critical. The panel provided an opportunity for an unscripted discussion on the priorities of four significant funders in the field and considerations shaping future thinking.

Key points raised by the panel and in discussion were:

- Private foundations can be flexible and responsive philanthropic vehicles with the freedom to invest in those areas which the state cannot or will not advance.
- Priorities are informed by analysis of the changing political and legal environment – for example, the situation migrants and refugees face, the opportunities for securing changes in policies and practices and the barriers.
- There is a stronger focus than is often reflected in state policies on ensuring that migrants, refugees and their families are treated with respect and dignity; that they are able to contribute fully to their new communities and can ultimately thrive in a society that is comfortable with diversity and that recognises the opportunities that immigration brings; on legal rights and realising that protection in practice; and on bringing actors together to collaborate.

- Building public understanding of migration and contributing to accuracy and depth in media coverage have become a priority for some foundations, recognising the part it plays in shaping government policy making from EU to local level.
 - A balance is sought between support for organisations operating nationally and locally to achieve change at both levels.
 - Funding can be at a considerable scale: the Robert Bosch Foundation, for example, has a total budget of around €80 million a year to spend on 900 projects spanning the areas of health, science, society, education and international relations, including projects relating to migrants.
 - Care is taken in funding decisions not to replace funding which would otherwise have been undertaken by the state or being seen as a replacement for the state in times of austerity.
 - Some foundations, as funders of and actors within civil society, take the role of convener and facilitator to bring together representatives from different sectors to share ideas, work collaboratively, and in some cases to make recommendations for policy change. Some work with other foundations, or operate as a network of foundations, to achieve common goals.
 - Foundations differ in the extent to which they are willing to fund organisations working on controversial issues or groups, and take risks in supporting organisations outside the mainstream of civil society or activity such as public interest litigation. They differ in the extent they will fund core costs or capacity building rather than individual projects; or research to provide an evidence base. The challenge of securing core funding remains considerable for many smaller and grassroots organisations in particular, as these costs are often not met by funding bodies.
 - Future developments will impact on future funding needs e.g. the uncertain future of EU mobile citizens and refugee resettlement in UK following Brexit vote. More work is required to equip other funders to identify those areas in the migration field, related to their own remits, which would benefit from strategic finance.
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Friday morning 9th September- *Policy at European Level*

Strategic Options for European Agendas

Chair: Nassia Ioannou, Ministry of Interior, Greece

Claude Moraes MEP, Chair, Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee,
European Parliament

Presentation

Read a summary of the presentation [here](#)

The presentation focused on the role of the EU and European Parliament in particular in supporting Member States to facilitate integration; the opportunity provided by the refugee crisis as well as the challenges; and issues on the policy agenda including reform of the EU Common Asylum Package, the



Claude Moraes MEP, Chair, Civil Liberties, Justice
and Home Affairs Committee, European Parliament

EU Resettlement Scheme, revision of the Dublin regulation, new measures on legal migration and the future direction and funding of integration measures.

Integration is not primarily an EU competence. It has been seen as a 'softer' area of policy but the EU does support Member States' in three ways: through funding, action plans setting out recommendations to promote integration, and legislation on migration and asylum.

The European Parliament, as one of the three main institutions of the EU, plays a crucial role in shaping

EU operations through its exercise of scrutiny over the executive and as co-legislator with the European Council and European Commission. The presentation emphasised the need for a coherent political narrative on resettlement and integration from progressive forces, to reclaim the discourse of migration from anti-migrant voices and those who do not recognise the value of integration measures due to a lack of diversity within their own State.

The revitalised focus on EU resettlement policies also provides an opportunity to renew the integration agenda. It can demonstrate that strategic planning to promote entry to the labour market, access to public services and other critical elements of integration, is effective in enabling migrants to make a contribution to Member States and become part of local communities. The EU must be seen to deliver added value in fostering integration at the local and national level. The current patchwork of integration policies, tools and funding such as the [EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#) must be better synchronised and understood within Member States to achieve this. Integration can no longer be treated as a soft issue.

The current focus of refugee resettlement and integration should also generate practices which promote the integration of all migrants into their new community. This includes mobile EU citizens (to complement the revision of the Blue Card), to meet the needs of migrants and national labour markets. It will be critical to the narrative shift from 'problematic' migration to migration as an asset which is managed effectively to add value to labour markets.

Discussion

The discussion focused on the political opportunities for achieving policy reform; on the importance of changing the narrative; and the relationship between EU institutions and cities:

- The crisis has generated a real impetus for more effective integration measures, e.g. through reform of the asylum package and measures on legal migration. There is support for this from the highest levels in Brussels.
- City and regional authorities are potential allies for those in Brussels who want more effective measures, even where Conservative controlled. They will also welcome bringing together measures on refugees and other migrants in a common integration agenda.
- We cannot ignore the integration challenges related to free movement in Europe such as undercutting of wages.
- Member States need to use what is already available from Brussels – the legal framework on asylum, for instance and funding for integration and opportunities for dialogue e.g. through national contact points.
- Investment in multi-level governance structures related to integration and bolstering the voices of civil society and local actors would support the implementation of these measures and increase their efficacy.
- The European Court of Auditors requires evidence that integration funding is delivering its intended purpose. The AMIF Partnership Principle provides an avenue through which civil society can assist in building this evidence base if there are sufficient resources and capacity to do so.

The Commission's new Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals

Laura Corrado, Head of Legal Migration and Integration, DG Migration and Home Affairs

Presentation

[View the PowerPoint presentation slides here](#)

There is a new level of cooperation across the Commission on integration including Commissioners and a Commission wide strategy [Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals](#) (June 2016). It provides a framework to mainstream integration across *Directorates-Generals* (DGs) to maximise synergy with other funding programmes and priority areas of work, e.g. unemployment and youth attainment.

The Action Plan provides concrete tools to support Member States in promoting integration, still targeting all third-country nationals but particularly refugees. It has five priority areas:

- **Pre-departure & pre-arrival:** to ensure Member States are equipped to deliver resettlement including exploring private sponsorship models; and improving cooperation before arrival of refugees into communities, such as language provision before departure.
- **Education:** including online language assessments for newly arrived migrants; promotion of inclusive education and upgrading of skills; and removal of barriers for participation of children in early childhood education.
- **Labour market integration and access to vocational training:** support for projects delivering labour market integration through “fast-track” insertion and vocational training, the validation of skills and recognition of qualifications (in line with the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#)); projects to support entrepreneurship and promotion of best practices for labour market integration.
- **Access to basic services:** to strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank to fund temporary accommodation, health facilities and social housing; the development of training

modules for health professionals; promoting exchanges between States and cities on housing issues; and supporting best practice in care provision for vulnerable third country nationals.

- **Active participation and social inclusion:** to promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and European common values. DG Justice has an important role to play in financing projects to promote this work. Changing the migration narrative is a key focus.

Guidance is provided on implementation in each of these areas as non-binding recommendations. The Commission will encourage action, full use of the funding available and tools offered under the *EU Skills Agenda*. To strengthen policy coordination and engagement with civil society, the Commission will involve stakeholders through the [European Integration Network](#) and mechanisms such as the *AMIF Partnership Principle* and Urban Agenda.

Mainstreaming, moving beyond individual projects, is key; strengthening Member States' policies and better use of EU funding.

Exploring and encouraging take up of the Canadian private sponsorship model is a priority, whilst also being aware of criticisms of it. It is a good pre-departure/arrival measure.

The Action Plan has been quite well received by Member States as providing support, not overstepping competency. Implementation will be reviewed regularly. The draft EU budget 2017 includes an extra €150 million for integration, a figure subject to a mid-term view.

Labour market integration and social inclusion

Manuela Geleng, Head of the Taskforce “Refugees”, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

Presentation

View the PowerPoint presentation slides [here](#)

The integration of refugees into the labour market has been an area of concern. Unemployment figures for refugees remain higher than for EU-born citizens, particularly women. Employment outcomes catch up with EU-born citizens over time, as refugees acquire language and other country-specific skills, but this levelling up can take up to 20 years.

Returns to education are also lower than for EU born. Language skills are important - intermediate language skills provide a considerable boost to employment outcomes. Levels of poverty amongst non-EU nationals are nearly twice that of EU-born citizens. This also levels out over time but the data shows that there are social integration challenges requiring redress.

The challenge of evidencing prior education and employment history for refugees is one major barrier to their access to the labour market. The *Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals* under the Commission's new *Skills Agenda* will support employers to identify and profile the skills and qualifications of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants.



Manuela Geleng, Head of the Taskforce “Refugees”, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

Integrating refugees into the labour market as soon as possible is a priority for DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (EMPL)'s *Refugee Taskforce*. Integration is primarily a Member State competence so the Commission is encouraging investment in refugees' education and skills to ensure the sustainability of the EU workforce in the long-term.

Refugees have greater rates of acquisition of citizenship than other third-country nationals. Young refugees in particular will remain in Member State's labour market for decades to come. So refugees should be seen as an investment for future economic and social prosperity.

Critical to the advancement of the labour market integration of refugees will be the Commission's proposed [Skills Guarantee](#). It aims to help low-skilled adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and progress towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent, which could do much to improve labour market outcomes for low-skilled migrants.

The cost of non-integration is higher than investing in integration.

Discussion

The discussion focused on relationships with Member States and with cities, and uses of EU funding:

- In the context of restructuring of labour markets and of national politics there will be resistance to measures proposed by Brussels – Member States value their sovereignty. It is better to build consensus on measures needed than to press too hard for them.
- Lack of labour market integration represents a major loss in terms of the skills that are wasted. The business community needs to take this on board and play their part.
- Cities are not seeing the AMIF funding because it is controlled by national Ministries. Nor are they consulted; it is not an open process. Cities are likewise not part of developing the Commission's action plan, yet there are measures relating to policies and practices at city level.
- The Commission needs to recognise the reality of "integration" of migrants with irregular status (if not that word). Restricting funding to legally resident migrants flies in the face of the reality that cities are dealing with.
- There are instances of EU integration funds being misused, e.g. for the segregation of Roma not their inclusion. There is a need and intention to improve monitoring of its use.
- Strengthening the network of national contact points should provide an opportunity for cities and other actors to engage with them more effectively in future.

Final session: Vision and the art of the possible.

Chair: Sarah Spencer, Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity, COMPAS, Oxford

Discussion on key themes from the symposium, led by Gabriele de Giorgi, Chief of Political Staff to the Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior, Italy, and Brian Killoran, CEO, Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Opening remarks focused on two dominant themes from discussions throughout the week: the importance of multi-level governance arrangements, and of facilitating the contribution of civil society. Further themes were brought out in the discussion which followed including the need to address the dominant narratives, the importance of a stronger evidence base, devising effective policy interventions and building on the new strengths that have emerged at the local level:

Multilevel governance: challenges and opportunities

- **Multi-level governance – its vital importance and current severe limitations** - emerged as a crucial theme throughout the symposium. There are key players at regional, city and community level whose experiences are not built into policy making at national or EU level. New fora and networks are needed to facilitate consultation, dialogue and negotiation. They should shape priorities as well as implement policies and monitor outcomes. One outcome will be greater consensus on what needs to be done.
- **This is not without challenges:** the implicit hierarchical nature of arrangements in which participants have differing mandates, powers and resources; and differing requirements for accountability. Expectations also need to be managed. Everyone must be clear about why they are around the table and realistic about what they can achieve. Before we call for new forms of multilevel governance we need to look at what already works well and know exactly what we are calling for. The Portuguese model is one from which others could learn.
- **Multilevel governance nevertheless has potential to provide a clear pathway for national states to supply data and information** to, and learn from, the local level. Municipalities and other local actors will then be empowered to more effective interventions, including using data to garner support and inform public opinion. Not all localities have the resources to produce or access this data themselves. This system would also facilitate policy development from municipalities and neighbourhoods to the national level.
- **There is often cooperation between levels, and with civil society, in implementing policies,** particularly for service delivery, but that has not led to their being heard when national policies are developed. Moreover, dialogue needs to be with those implementing policies in cities, not just those representing cities at a political level.
- **EU policy making is particularly distant from, but relevant to, the local level.** EU policy can seem impractical locally and direct dialogue is needed for each level to inform the other. Some of the most deprived areas will not have capacity to engage at EU level and strategies are needed to ensure their experience is nevertheless taken into account: a balance between direct access and a voice through representatives and networks.
- **A balance then has to be found between municipal autonomy and ensuring delivery** of the national plan: for municipalities to decide how to deliver, reflecting local priorities, while maintaining consistency and standards of performance.
- **National governments may not have the political will to open up policy making** to include direct input from local government or civil society. They see it as their own mandate and are unwilling to cede any control.
- **The response to the ‘refugee crisis’ can be used as evidence of the pivotal role of cities** and need to learn from them; a lever to make the case for a more effective governance system. The European Parliament could task a rapporteur to make an assessment and provide an evidence base on the ways in which cities and civil society responded to the crisis, as well as on the implications of fragmented EU-national-local policy making arrangements.
- **National and local governments often sub-contract to civil society providers** but do not engage them in discussion on policy development, despite their direct experience of challenges on the ground. Civil society should be empowered to enter into a stronger relationship with decision-makers. Their experience and concerns should be listened to from the beginning and not only relied on in an emergency.
- **There is a need for some professionalization of civil society,** it is argued, for this to work including capacity to take account of government perspectives: a need for civil society to be pragmatic but still hold on to its values. There is some concern within the sector itself about negativity alienating

potential partners. There is work to be done to get different actors to meet in the middle and get a better understanding of each other's perspectives.

- **The importance of the transnational dimension should not be neglected.** Multi-level governance needs to include transnational policies so that people can remain connected to their previous country of residence and the implications of those connections are understood.
- **Avoiding waste is a further argument for having multiple actors around the table** to coordinate well informed interventions because resources for integration are severely constrained. Providers often already know the most efficient means to use resources and where savings can be made.

Evidence base and knowledge exchange

- **Well informed policy means a stronger evidence base** and monitoring of a range of agreed indicators on integration across economic, social and other domains. Even during an era of 'fact-free politics', evidence still carries weight. Narratives appeal to emotions but facts are needed to back it up.
- **The outcomes of privately sponsored refugee pathways are just one example**, to inform future policy development.
- **Different kinds of data could be used more strategically** to support intervention strategies. A stronger evidence base would enable integration to become less of a soft area of policy making.
- **Longitudinal studies from arrival over a period of years can provide a rich resource**— albeit difficult to carry out and to establish causal relationships in relation to factors and interventions impacting on outcomes.
- **There is a striking lack of means to share knowledge, learning and ideas across** and between tiers of government and with civil society. A '**coalition of the willing**' is urgently needed among progressive policy makers and actors willing to share learning, brain storm on options and build a broader consensus on strategic interventions. Through regular contact and network development a common perspective on the issue may emerge which would promote more coherent migration management.
- **What form could this take, and who might fund it/make it happen?** The European Commission's mandate to communicate best practice is one potential means. It is keen to make integration, and the evidence base, more visible to raise the priority level of integration policies and their effectiveness. This is also a primary role for philanthropic foundations.

The power of narratives

- **The rise of populist politics has intensified the need for progressive narratives which, like those used by populists, appeal to emotions.** The ground swell of support for refugees has demonstrated the scale on which people retain humanitarian values and respect for the dignity of each individual. A means to articulate those values in national media debates needs to be found. However, narratives need to be backed up by robust evidence to build a different consensus.
- **Narrative is not enough – there is also a need to find new ways to communicate**, learning from successful models, such as the equal marriage campaign in Ireland, focusing on human stories with facts in the background. This humanised the circumstances, allowing people to relate to each other's experiences. Connecting with people's values is where the hard work needs to be done.
- **There is work to be done to interrogate the myths of integration**, at national and local level; and to replace divisive notions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' migrants with a focus on meeting needs and enabling full and equal contributions to the labour market and society.
- **New approaches must take account of the 'native losers'**, the uneven distribution of impacts of migration and sense of relative deprivation. As Rob Ford suggested earlier in the week we need to

understand the tinder, the spark and the flame. Migration dynamics cannot be wished away but neither can electoral politics.

- **Narratives should account for and appreciate the full diversity of the world that we live in, not only migrants** – class, gender, age, race, faith and disability.
- **It is not only the message that counts but also the messenger.** Citizens can be wary of narratives from national governments or Brussels which can be seen as propaganda. The action has to come from those who are closer to citizens and conveyed at a more concrete level. It is most effective if it comes from civil society.

More effective policy interventions

- **The ‘external shocks’ Europe has experienced in relation to finance, political instability fuelling the refugee crisis, and terrorism, have provided a more unfavourable context for integration** as Joaquin Arango outlined earlier in the week, and this therefore necessitates new approaches.
- **The refugee crisis has nevertheless provided a political opportunity to win the argument for more effective policy interventions.** It has demonstrated the limitations of current policy and governance arrangements, highlighted the absolute reliance on municipalities and civil society, and brought many new actors into the field.
- **A key goal should be mainstreaming** – patching integration into every policy agenda; to move from projects to integration as a systemic policy priority. Clear leadership and coordination is nevertheless needed (not mainstreaming away to invisibility). Policy will also need to take account of the vulnerabilities of those such as children and women who need additional and specific support.
- **The principles underpinning the intercultural paradigm - equality, diversity and interaction – form a sound base** for evaluating new approaches and responses to issues that arise. They are well tested at the local level and proved a workable yardstick for policy makers.

Build on what is happening at the local level

- **A major trend across Europe is the growth of volunteerism** in response to refugees and to the far right. There is an appetite to contribute, a ‘goodwill revolution’, and this now needs some level of structure (there are many who want to help but do not know how) and a sharing of learning on what works in the short and long term. The private sponsorship scheme is just one way to capitalise on the willingness to contribute.
- **Notwithstanding the importance of including civil society voices in policy making, civil society organisations must not get too drawn in.** They must still do the work on the ground, not lose touch with everyday needs and speak that language or they will lose the trust of local people.
- **The refugee crisis has highlighted that both the immediate response and long term measures are primarily at the local level.** In many ways we have seen a decentralisation of responsibility. This has proven effective and there should be ways to ensure it continues so as not to lose skills and capacities.
- **People are often fearful and change is hard. Local level actions are the opportunity to have challenging conversations,** build new narratives and strengthen resilience of individuals and communities. Strong leadership and the courage to take a stand against the far right is needed.
- **Community leaders from across civil society groups and from business should be included.** They can be the partners that can do much of the delivery. Local action may not change the national story but will change communities one by one.
- **Interaction between all groups in society is crucial.** Youth policies are pivotal. Young people should be engaged through civic consciousness programmes, intercultural dialogue and activism networks. Partnership in common endeavour builds trust and understanding.

- **‘Welcoming America’ has shown it is possible to build coalitions of the willing from the bottom up:** key actors from across public, private and voluntary sectors can work together *and* take the lead in their own sector. This can be highly effective in achieving the ‘tipping point’ where public opinion changes and can in turn lead to law and policy reform.
- **Local organisations can pilot new approaches** too controversial or uncertain to be introduced first at the national level.
- **Refugees and migrants should themselves be involved in all debates and activities.** Their leadership should be recognised and contribution highlighted. Their acquisition of citizenship should be celebrated at the local level.
- **There is a need to shift from the integration of migrants to a focus on how we all live together in a diverse society,** as at the national level, across all identities.
- **Foundations have a key role to play in resourcing civil society** to fulfil roles the state will not or cannot support, in building networks and in ensuring means of shared learning. There is an appetite for learning on best practice, in the public sector and civil society, which needs to be met. There is also a need for training and capacity building in NGOs because of the highly complex political environments in which they are working.

The symposium discussions, in essence, suggest that the component parts of a strategic approach to integration – ideas, evidence, expertise, motivation at all levels of governance and civil society, a level of resources and of consensus on priorities – are all present; but key players and interventions are fragmented, operating in siloes within countries and across Europe - at a time when the goal of inclusive societies faces an unprecedented barrier in populist politics. No single step will change that but rather a range of initiatives from new modes of multi-level governance that recognise the centrality of municipalities, a stronger evidence base and powerful narratives to strengthen the capacity of civil society, identified throughout the week and highlighted in this report.





Global Exchange

on Migration & Diversity

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.