



INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

BACKGROUND

European societies have become increasingly diverse in recent decades: today, approximately 34 million residents of the European Union are foreign-born, and one in ten young people born in the EU has a migrant background. This diversity of national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds is especially pronounced and most immediately visible in cities. Ensuring that residents with a migrant and refugee background can access key services, as well as opportunities to participate in labour markets and social life, has wider benefits for the wellbeing and prosperity of communities as a whole. Yet migrant populations often face persistent disadvantage in education, employment, housing, healthcare, social participation, and other spheres of life. These long-standing challenges have been dramatically exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has exposed migrant and refugee communities to higher risks related to their health, job security, and livelihood; meanwhile, lockdowns and social distancing have disrupted the provision of many integration services.

While in the EU integration policy is largely a national responsibility, the local level's role in promoting the inclusion of diverse residents, as well as in fostering community trust and social cohesion, has gained growing recognition in recent years. In 2015-16, confronted with high number of new arrivals, many European cities raised to the challenge with rapid and pragmatic responses; five years later, they played a key role in protecting their vulnerable residents from the disruption triggered by COVID 19. As a result, the principle that sustainable progress in migrant and refugee inclusion depends on concerted action at local, regional, national, and European level has taken hold among policymakers and practitioners. Yet a number of factors—such as policy coordination gaps, limitations in the availability of funding and data, and barriers to knowledge exchange—if left unaddressed, risk standing in the way of effective and impactful multilevel action.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The Urban Agenda Partnership on Inclusion of Migrant and Refugees, coordinated by the City of Amsterdam and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG Home), is uniquely well-placed to address these challenges and maximise the potential of multilevel governance for inclusion. Since the Partnership's inception, representatives of cities, Member States, EU institutions, other key stakeholders such as think tanks, city networks, and international organisations, as well as representatives of migrant and refugee communities, have collaborated on an equal footing to identify and address collective challenges.



2021-2022 ACTIONS

The present Action Plan sets out the Partnership's objectives until the end of 2022. These actions make a diverse set of themes and objectives: some seek to continue the work from the previous phase, while others venture into new areas. Each action will be implemented by an action group, composed of Partnership members as well as additional stakeholders, under the supervision of an action leader.



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Improve access to health care for hard-to-reach migrant populations, with a particular focus on challenges exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



MENTAL HEALTH

Strengthen the prevention, early identification and treatment of mental-health concerns among migrant and refugee populations.



ART & CULTURE

Make art and culture more accessible and representative of diverse populations, to leverage cultural participation for social inclusion and cohesion.



INCLUSION OF LGBTQI+

Identify challenges to inclusion facing LGBTQI+ migrant communities and exploring successful models to address intersecting forms of disadvantage, by consulting with relevant communities and promoting knowledge-sharing among experienced stakeholders.



EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

Facilitate evidence-based policymaking on integration, by improving the availability of comparable integration data at the regional/urban level, and by researching the links between national policies and local integration outcomes.



FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Expand cities' knowledge and use of available financial instruments to invest in the social infrastructure needed to advance migrant and refugee inclusion, by assisting local policymakers to pool resources from private and public financial institutions.



CHILDREN IN MIGRATION

Enhance the protection of children in migration, by identifying gaps and developing solutions to improve cross-border cooperation.