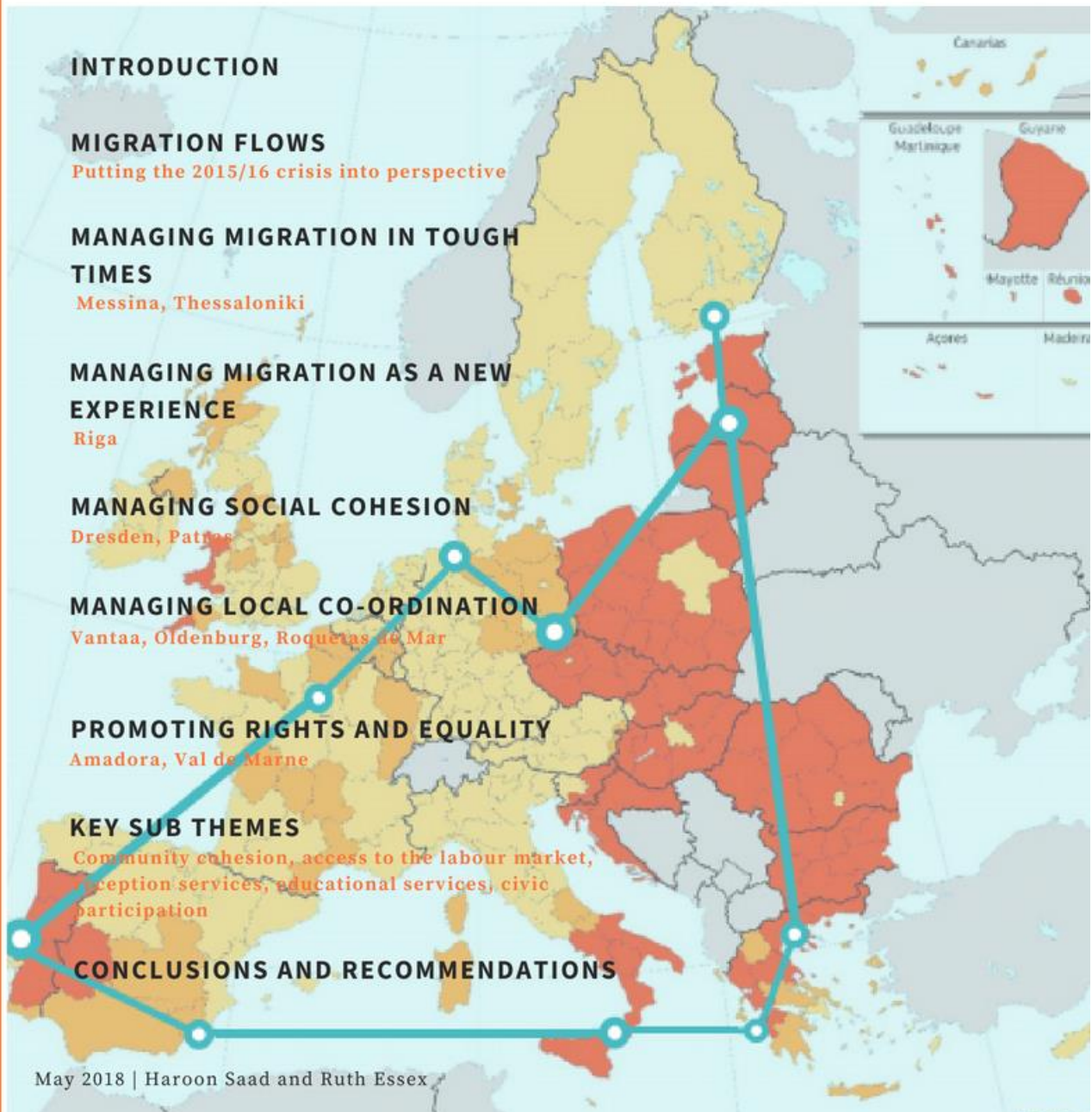


# Arrival Cities: Final Dispatches



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## **INTRODUCTION TO ARRIVAL CITIES**

Arrival cities began its life in September 2015 at what was the height of migration flows witnessed in the EU since the Second World War. Arrival Cities also took place against a backcloth of rising discrimination and prejudice against immigrants as evidenced by the rise of populist parties across the EU. As a result one can observe a rapid change in the population structure and interactions between individuals and social groups in cities. Cities of migration are places of inclusion and exclusion.

It is cities that have had to tackle the challenges (new and old) in circumstances that have been difficult owing to the on-going long tail of the economic crash of 2008 and the changing political landscape .Local authorities have had to try and support economic integration of migrants in difficult economic conditions where job growth has not been strong . Alongside this local authorities have also had to face issues such as the educational under achievement of second- and third-generation migrants; rise of racist and xenophobe movements; increasing diversification in the composition of immigration flows (e.g. migrants from either Member States and third countries; both skilled and unskilled migrants).

It was in this context that the Arrival Cities project took place. The project brought together a network of 10 organizations from 8 Member States. These were:

- Municipality of Amadora (lead partner)
- Municipality of Roquetas Del Mar
- City of Riga
- City of Oldenburg
- City of Vantaa
- City of Patras
- City of Thessaloniki
- City of Messina
- Technical University of Dresden
- Department of Val de Marne

The overall aim of the network was to bring about through a process of reflection, exchange of experience at transnational level and closer inter-sectoral working at local level, the development of Integrated Action Plans that would enable each partner to improve local actions to address this issue.

To realize this overall aim the network undertook the following key actions:

- At the outset the partners identified some key cross cutting sub themes(Social cohesion ;integration into the labour market; reception services; educational services and citizen participation ) that impacted on all partners and these formed the basis of transnational programme of exchange and learning that involved:
  - Five transnational workshops each focused on one of the key sub themes;
  - Capitalisation of the work undertaken in these workshop through the production of workshop reports with case studies ;
  - The production and adoption of an agreed methodology to facilitate the peer review process undertake in the transnational workshops
  - The production of discussion notes to stimulate discussion and debate at local level linked to the five sub themes.
- Each partner established at local level an Urbact Local Group (ULG). Each ULG had a composition that ensured both vertical (multi governance) and horizontal (multi sectoral and multi-disciplinary) integration. Each ULG undertook a series of activities:
  - Members of the ULG met regularly and participated in the transnational workshops.
  - The ULG undertook wider local consultation at local level
  - Each ULG produced an Integrated Action Plan that secured political endorsement
  - Each ULG ensured wide dissemination of the IAP at local level

This publication constitutes the final product of the Arrival Cities network and in the following pages you will be able to read more and also connect to all the key products that have been produced.

Haroon Saad

Lead Expert

## **MIGRATION FLOWS: PUTTING THE 2015/16 CRISIS INTO PERSPECTIVE**

In a period of “fake news” the reportage of migration flows has tended to be presented in a wholly unbalanced way. Anyone who was following the coverage of the “migration crisis” of 2015-2016 would have been presented with picture that somehow migration flows had reached new heights and were in danger of becoming unstoppable.

In fact any proper regard of migration flows in the EU would have very quickly seen that the EU had become very migrant dependent long before the 2015/16 “crisis”.

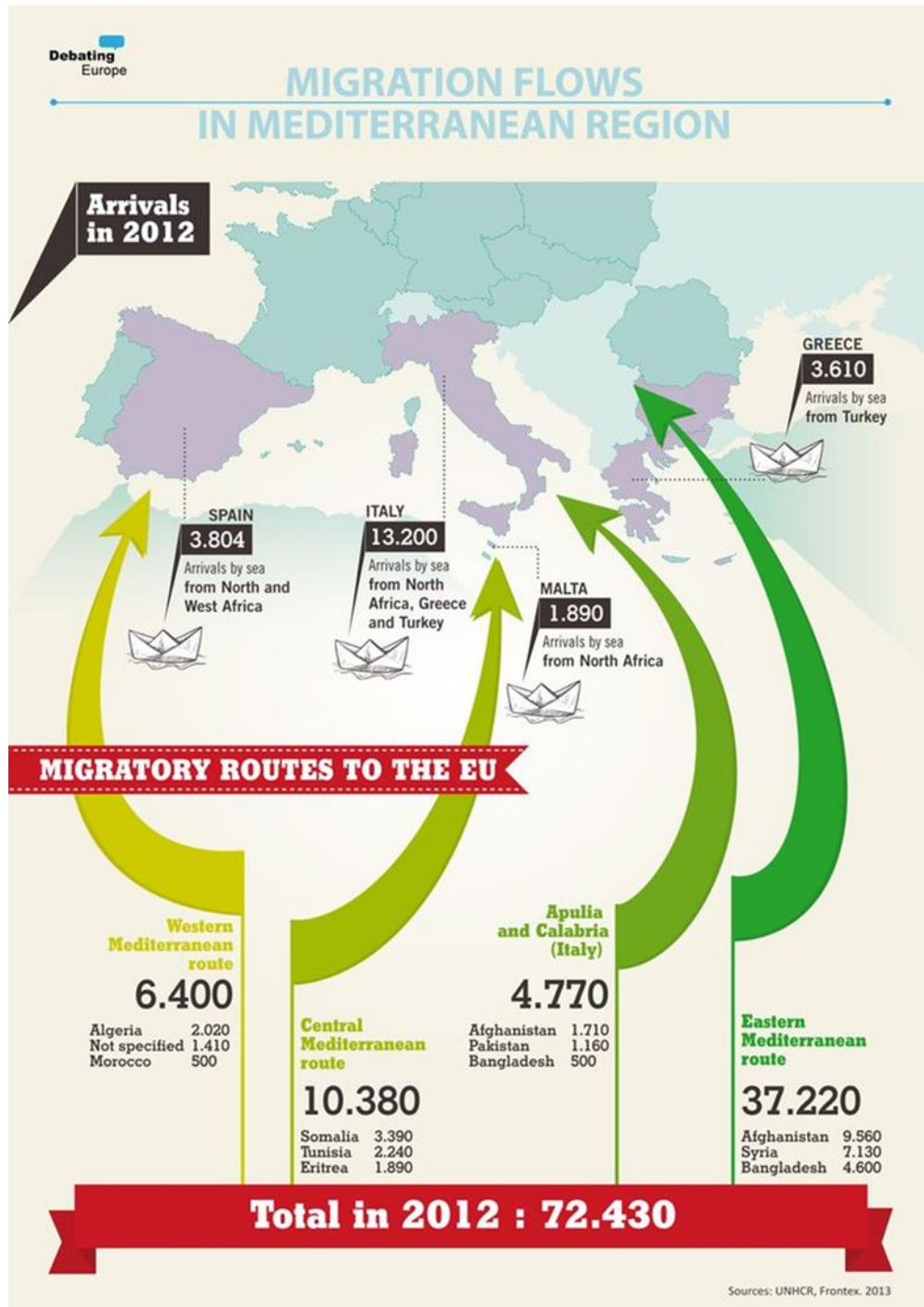
Taking a slightly longer view it’s very clear that during the period 2000-2008 the EU experienced also high flows of migrants. In 2008, 3.8 million people migrated to and between the EU-27 Member States. Within this trend are included larger numbers of EU-27 citizens. The number of EU-27 citizens migrating to a Member State other than their own country of citizenship increased on average by 12 % per year during the period 2002–08. In 2008, the EU-27 Member States received nearly two million migrants of other EU nationalities. The remaining 1.8 million immigrants to EU-27 Member States were non-EU citizens. Among them, Moroccans were the largest group, the only one to exceed 100 000 persons, followed by citizens of China, India, Albania and the Ukraine. This figure is very similar to those who arrived in 2015/16.

So the question is how come there was no “migration crisis” in 2008? The answer perhaps relates to the kind of migrants who arrived in 2008 and how they arrived in comparison to 2015/16. Foreign-born persons can be differentiated according to the level of development of their country of citizenship. The Human Development Index (HDI) is used in order to reflect this structure. This index is calculated by the United Nations under the UN Development Programme as a composite index incorporating statistical measures of life expectancy, literacy, educational attainment and GDP per capita. Countries are classified into high, medium and low developed countries. The group of high HDI countries consists mainly of Europe, North America, a large part of South America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and some countries in Western Asia. Medium and low developed countries are mainly situated in the rest of Asia and Africa. Among the migrants living in the European Union in 2008, 46 % had migrated from high HDI countries and 45.6 % were migrants from a medium HDI country. Only 7.4 % of the foreign-born population living in the EU are from low developed countries.

In contrast, in 2015/16 the vast majority of foreign migrants were from low HDI countries. The picture from Italy and Greece confirms this. In Italy, an increasing share of arrivals consisted of Guinean (13%) and Nigerian (13%) nationals, followed by migrants from Bangladesh (12%) and Cote d’Ivoire (10%). Greece received more migrants from Syria (36%), Iraq (10%), Democratic Republic of Congo (7%), Pakistan (7%) and Afghanistan (6%).

The other big difference between 2008 and 2015/16 is of course related to how they arrived. In 2008 it was not on boats operated by smugglers. This visual difference in as sense reinforced the image generated of an “invasion” However, even here one needs to bear in mind that the

routes and methods used in 2015/16 had already started in 2012. This is graphically shown by the chart below.



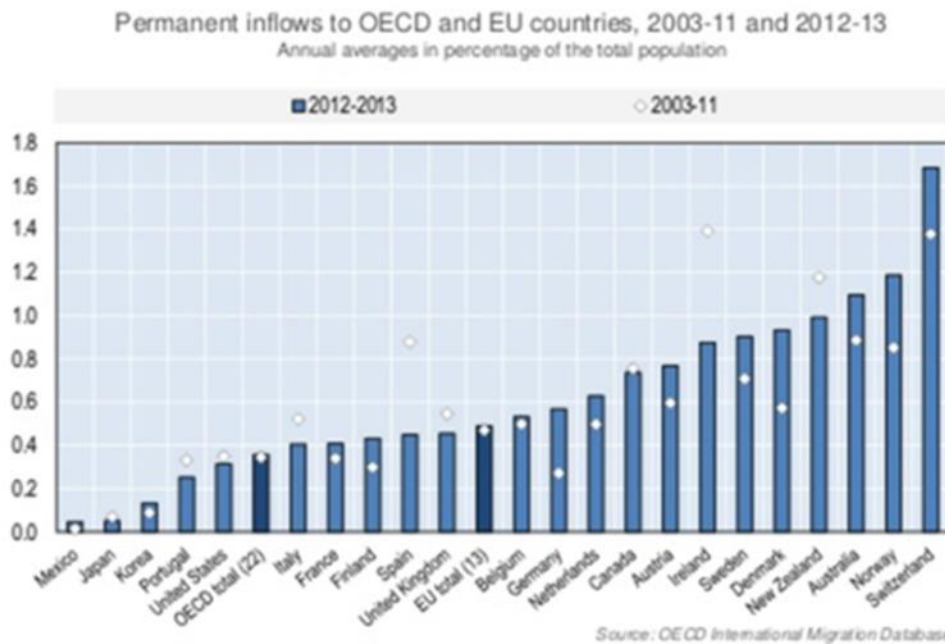
## There is a need to take a wider view

To set the 2015/16 crisis into its proper perspective it's necessary to place it into context.

As a proportion of the world population, the number of international migrants has stayed relatively steady: roughly 3 per cent since 1960, according to the sociologist Hein de Haas. Although the proportion of migrants has not grown significantly, the origin and direction of migration has changed. Research by Hein de Haas and Mathias Czaika suggests that people are leaving a much wider range of countries than ever before, and they are heading to a much narrower range of destinations than ever before.<sup>1</sup> They are going to the places where power and wealth have become concentrated. Europe, and north-western Europe in particular, is one of those places.

This point is well reflected in the following table produced by the OECD:

### The destinations for migration have changed significantly with the crisis



<sup>1</sup> Mathias Czaika and Hein de Haas, "The Globalisation of Migration: Has the world become more Migratory?" 2014

Most of this migration takes place legally: an estimated nine out of ten migrants who enter Europe do so with permission. However, since the 1990s, as borders have come down within Europe, giving most EU citizens free movement and passport-free travel, its external frontier has become increasingly militarized. Amnesty International estimates that, between 2007 and 2013, the EU spent almost two billion euros on fences, surveillance systems and patrols.

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, to which all EU members are signatories, states are obliged not to penalize people who cross their borders in search of asylum, or to force them back to territories where they would be in danger. Anybody who asks for asylum is entitled to due process, and to have their claim assessed on an individual basis; officials can't just declare a whole group of asylum seekers 'genuine' or 'bogus' at the stroke of a pen. In reality, the EU has tried to prevent refugees from reaching its territory wherever possible – by closing down legal routes, such as the ability to claim asylum at overseas embassies; by introducing penalties for transport companies that allow people to travel into the EU without the correct documents; and by signing treaties with its neighbours that offer them trade incentives and easier travel for their own citizens in return for policing their borders with the EU more thoroughly. If refugees do make it into the EU, then an agreement known as the Dublin Regulation stipulates that it is the responsibility of the first EU country they set foot in to deal with their asylum claim. If they travel on to a second (or third, or fourth) country, they can be forcibly returned to their point of arrival, with the help of an EU-wide police fingerprint database known as Eurodac.

To give a sense of Europe's priorities, in the same period as it spent two billion euros on border security, the EU spent only an estimated 700 million on reception conditions for refugees. The refugees who arrived in 2015/16 have travelled by two principal routes: across the central Mediterranean from North Africa, and through south-eastern Europe via Turkey. The largest group by nationality to take these routes are Syrians; the war in Syria has caused one of the most acute refugee crises in recent memory, although most of the six million Syrian refugees are living in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Those who have come to Europe to seek asylum are joined by people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Nigeria, Mali and elsewhere.

Asylum seekers are subject to particularly complex and often violent filtering. Once they cross Europe's frontiers, their movement is restricted; they are locked up or segregated in accommodation far from city centres. Their right to work or to access social security is denied or severely limited. While their claims are being assessed, often by a process that is opaque, hostile and inconsistent, they live with the threat that what freedoms they do have might be curtailed at any moment. The system tries to place them into categories – refugee or economic migrant, legal or illegal, deserving or undeserving – that do not always fit the reality of their lives.

Finally a small but salutary footnote: In November 2017, a coalition of human rights groups published a list of 33,293 people who had died since 1993 as a result of 'border militarization, asylum laws, detention policies and deportations' in Europe.



## MANAGING MIGRATION IN TOUGH TIMES

### MESSINA



Messina is the capital of the province of Messina and is the third largest city on the island of Sicily. The port of Messina, the closest point in Sicily to the mainland of Italy, is an important centre for commerce and for cruise ship tourism. Messina's economy depends largely on commerce and agriculture.

As with other cities belonging to the Arrival Cities Network Messina has a long history of migration. The migrant population currently numbers around 12,000, making up about 5% of Messina's population. The majority of migrants (42%) live in the municipal area, the rest is located in the smaller cities of Messina's province. The main migrant populations are from Asia (mainly Sri Lanka and Philippines) and Africa (mainly Morocco).

Refugees arriving in Messina are managed through a two stage reception system.

Stage one deals with immediate issues, including: Identification by the police at the arrival centre; Transfer by bus or plane of adults and families who are in transit through Italy; Emergency accommodation, Messina provides 450 places for adults in different camps located in the City; Emergency accommodation for unaccompanied minors through the child reception system in Messina. About 2,000 unaccompanied children are currently being looked after in Messina.

Stage two provides support to migrants who are seeking to stay in Italy. This stage is known as SPRAR (System for Protection for Refugees that request Asylum) an Italian best practices as it demonstrated to be an efficient system that is entirely supported by National funds. The SPRAR includes longer term accommodation and support for unaccompanied minors, with the

objective to assist and progressively accompany the migrant in the process of inclusion in the society.

The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:

- Messina is a transit point in the current mass movement of refugees from Africa, Asia and the Middle East through Europe and a key transit location for migrants crossing by sea from Libya to Italy. Since summer 2015, more than 14,000 people have arrived in Messina by boat, including 4.170 unaccompanied minors (746 in 2015; 2.432 in 2016; 772 in 2017 and 220 in 2018) that represent for Messina the main challenge in terms of managing reception and integration services.
- Prejudice is the highest barrier, it doesn't permit dialogue. In recent years the exceptional migratory flow together with the global economic crisis inflamed political extremism, contributing to the distrust and prejudice of local communities towards immigrant populations. This has created more and more hostility towards welcoming policies.

#### INTERVIEW WITH THE MAYOR OF MESSINA



*Renato Accorinti started his engagement as activist in the defence of civil rights, the environment and the fight against the mafia. Since the end of the seventies he engages himself in the pacifist movement and founded together with others, the non-violent movement of Messina and the Messina Committee for peace and disarmament. He is among the founders of the "No Ponte" movement that advocates against the building of a bridge connecting Sicily to the Italian peninsula and has been working for over forty years as teacher and technician of the Italian Athletics Federation. He has been elected Mayor of Messina in 2013 with the independent civic named Cambiamo Messina dal Basso.*

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<sup>2</sup> Photo by Giacomo Villari

Migrant integration is a political priority for Messina. The Mayor of Messina, Renato Accoriniti, takes a very strong, positive view of migration and wants Messina to be a place where migrants are welcomed and supported.

**What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

Without a doubt the main challenge has been establishing a dialogue among the various institutions involved in the management of migration flows that have been succeeding since 2013, testing the organizational and managerial capacity not only of the Municipal Administration but the national system itself. Today the reception system is well established and based on the synergy among the local institutions and other stakeholders.

**Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

Messina is a City of arrival and transit of migrants that are directed to other Italian and above all European destinations. Our effort has been to equip the territory with welcoming facilities and opportunities to allow the free choice to stay in the city or find a good place elsewhere thanks to educational activities - language and literacy courses - , fostering the achievement of educational qualifications and training apprentices, offered in particular by the SPRAR structures promoted by the Common.

**What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The efforts of local policies to face the challenge of integration, or rather co-habitation, are undermined by choices at National and European level that seem to go and go on countertrend towards the widespread propensity of urban communities in general to have a welcome and supportive approach . Cities should not be left alone.

**What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

It is very simple: clearer policies and a clear-cut stance with regard to the duty of receiving refugees and asylum seekers; and at the same time the realization of concrete actions to practice a real cross-border cooperation aimed at encouraging the emancipation of the peoples of third countries rather than the mere exploitation of natural resources and the export of armaments that fuel civil wars and dictatorial regimes.

**What is the city doing to address the challenges it faces?**

**A city wide Strategy**

The Integrated Action Plan has been developed as a city-wide strategy for managing migrant arrival and migrant integration in Messina. The Integrated Action Plan indeed covers two areas of action:

- Managing migrant arrivals: improving co-ordination of migrant arrival and reception services for adults; developing alternative accommodation and support services for unaccompanied minors.
- Supporting migrant integration: include actions on labour market integration through early interventions to increase the skills and employability of migrant workers.

As part of its IAP a number of actions have been developed:

- Delivery of primary health care services to migrant residents; training inter-cultural mediators to support this; providing emergency health services to new arrivals ;
- Providing primary reception facilities for unaccompanied minors (i.e. up to 3 months accommodation for minors of 18 years old) ;
- Co-ordinating the SPRAR system for second stage migrant reception ;
- Providing second stage reception facilities for young migrants through the SPRAR system (i.e. home and support until the age of 18);
- Accompanying the move on process for young people after 18 so they can stay in Messina and continue to be supported;
- Supplementary education for second generation migrant children;
- Homeless shelter and food distribution for people in need (which includes high numbers of migrants);
- Advocacy, advice and rights support for migrants; monitoring; providing language classes;
- Support unaccompanied minors and train tutors for unaccompanied minors.
- A multi-functional centre dedicated to migrants has been created by the city; in the same building migrants can have access to social and health services as well as municipal and public offices for the residence registration, and other public services, as well as the chair of local association offering support services for migrants. This is a real innovation in the Italian context as usually migrants as well as locals complain about the difficulty of having access to public services that are located in different areas of the city and often lack of coordination.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

### **Examples of some Actions**

#### **Together on Air**

The project aims to involve groups of multi-ethnic students from schools to contribute, through a guided tour followed by cultural mediators to the realization of a radio-television format that encourages the comparison and knowledge of cultural diversities, dreams and expectations of a young, ever-changing multi-ethnic community.

## **In (clusive) Community**

The objects of In(clusiv)e community are:

- Trying new forms of reception and integration dedicated to beneficiaries of international protection through the development of customized projects;
- Promoting forms of autonomous and cooperative work;
- Revitalization indoor centres of the Messina metropolitan area;
- Encouraging the valorisation of common best practices.

## **THESSALONKI**



Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece and the capital of the region of Macedonia. Thessaloniki is the major commercial port and economic hub for northern Greece. Of a population of around 320,000 (historical centre) more than 25,000 people living in Thessaloniki are migrants, making up about 8% of the city population. The main migrant communities originate from Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, former USSR countries, Armenia and Nigeria. In addition to the settled migrant population, Thessaloniki has experienced extraordinarily high levels of transit migration during the current mass movement of refugees seeking safety in Europe. After the closure of the Northern border, the situation has shifted from the management of an emergency and transit situation to one where refugees are staying on a more permanent basis in Thessaloniki and its environs. This has made the necessity to respond with a holistic strategy for the integration of refugees more urgent. It is projected that by 2018 more than 4500 persons will be hosted in the city in various accommodation programmes.

The City of Thessaloniki has been at the forefront of the management crisis of refugee flows. What started as an emergency response in 2015, with the closure of the Balkan Route and the EU-Turkey common statement of March 2016 has required a shift to a more effective urban response to accommodating refugee populations and their needs.

The city's population is diversifying; estimates suggest more than 15% of the total refugee and immigrant population is located in the Metropolitan Area of Thessaloniki, 46% of whom are thought to be women and children.

Thessaloniki is facing huge challenges in managing global migration flows at local level. The urgent challenges concern the transit migration of refugees, but there are also longer term challenges for integration of the city's settled migration population. These include:

- Lack of Municipal administrative capacity to respond to refugee and migrant needs due to the additional burden brought on to services in order to effectively respond
- Lack of knowledge on the profiles and needs of the urban refugee population
- Limitations in access to education (registration, secondary support to access Education)
- Limitations in access to health (which services where, language barriers, lack of Knowledge of system)
- Limitations in access to the labour market (recognition of diplomas, certification of skills, lack of clear labour market needs tailored to refugee profiles at the city and periphery levels)

#### **INTERVIEW WITH THE KALIPSO GOULA, FORMER VICE MAYOR AND CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL**



*With a Background in Law in 2008, Kalipso was elected member of the governing board of the Thessaloniki Bar Association. In the municipal elections in 2010 she won a seat in the Municipal Council of Thessaloniki, the second biggest city in Greece and she was re-elected in the municipal elections in 2014. During the period 2011-2017, she was appointed by the Mayor as Vice-Mayor, responsible for social welfare and solidarity. She was elected as President of the City Council Thessaloniki, the first woman in this seat, in 5th Mars 2017.*

**What are the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

We have to deal with a dual situation: on one hand, we have to respond with holistic measures – without necessarily having the overall competence-regarding the integration for sizeable populations of asylum seekers and refugees and on the other hand, we have to deal with a steady flow of new and spontaneous arrivals, with limited first reception facilities and populations who are still in transit. As relocation has come to an end since April 2018, there is no prospect for further organised relocation of refugees.

**Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

The city of Thessaloniki is dedicated to diversity and multiculturalism. The migrant and refugee population consists of a dynamic and youthful population, both with potentials for integration as well as providing social and economic dynamism to the city. As a secondary benefit, one can talk about the benefits related to the boosting of services which have had secondary benefits to the local population (in terms of direct services to locals but also in terms of employment) as well as the real estate market where apartments which have been empty for years, through inclusion in the accommodation program have both been refurnished and owners have guaranteed income for a viable period of time.

**What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The biggest worry is in view of the draft National Strategy which is expected to be formalized soon which will provide a strategic direction at central level, the lack of clear and committed resources dedicated to the implementation of an integration strategy which will also provide the necessary competences to local authorities who are called upon to undertake the majority of the burden.

**What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

The EU should be a lot more proactive in terms of implementing a proper burden sharing policy among all member states (a new relocation program) which is not based on voluntary participation but ensures that there is no imbalance, as it is today, between member states hosting refugees. Second, given that there is a higher pressure on some member states and cities in comparison to others in terms of population numbers and density of migrants and refugees, the analogous funding mechanisms dedicated to integration should be proportionate to the challenges cities are called upon to deal with.

**What is the city doing to address the challenges it faces?**

**New forms of Governance**

The City of Thessaloniki took the lead in responding to the emergency situation in 2015 by bringing together stakeholders in the city in order to coordinate emergency response efforts.

In the absence of any clear, coordinating planning at European, national or regional level, the Municipality of Thessaloniki has coordinated the development of an Integrated Action Plan to lead the Municipal response to the growing refugee crisis.

The Municipality is co-chairing an URBAN Working Group together with the UNHCR in order to coordinate the urban response, develop commonly agreed guiding principles that can direct the work of various agencies active in the field as well as provide input to the development of a city level integrated action plan. The IAP address the immediate and longer term challenges of:

- Providing accommodation, food and health support services for refugees who are trapped in Greece (emergency camps and short term accommodation for refugees with local host families).
- Developing a campaign to encourage the general public to take a positive view of refugees who settle in Greece.
- Developing social integration actions for refugees who elect to seek asylum in Greece.
- Developing, jointly with other agencies, Standards of Operation in various fields.
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable refugees including unaccompanied minors
- Develop an integrated plan that benefits both the urban poor and the refugee population;
- Developing a network of temporary accommodation in Thessaloniki for refugees;
- System building within the municipality to better coordinate refugee support actions at the city level;
- Facilitate the sharing of best practices, innovations and tools, between organisations currently working in Greece and from other responses in and outside the EU through organization of information sessions, seminars within the framework of the UWG;
- Provide and/or facilitate access to quality native language interpretation for refugees and asylum seekers in key locations such as municipal offices and at mainstream service points, including affordable technological solutions.
- Establish an electronic platform to be hosted by the Municipality of Thessaloniki to ensure accountability, transparency and assist in providing accessible information to all interested parties;
- Support community engagement at the neighbourhood level through supporting the organization of neighbourhood meetings in areas with a high density of refugee and migrant populations and by selecting and training a pool of neighborhood facilitators , who are trained in group dynamics, mediation, facilitation, and the municipality's public space activation policy.
- Work with the relevant education ministry bodies to create a learning network of current teachers and educators working with refugees and migrants.



Read the full IAP [here](#)

## **Examples of some Actions**

### **The REACT programme**

In May 2016 the Municipality of Thessaloniki launched an ambitious integrated housing programme called REACT, which stands for Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki runs the scheme in partnership with the UNHCR, and with funding from the EU, collaborating with local NGOs and the municipalities of Kalamaria and Neapoli-Sikies.

REACT identifies and establishes a target 888 temporary accommodation places in private apartments or collective centres and host families, and provides basic support services to the accommodated asylum seekers and relocation or family reunification candidates. The programme also provides social integration support.

REACT innovates in three major areas namely:

- The adjustment of the accommodation criteria according to the real estate market characteristics of Thessaloniki (e.g. assist home-owners with their financial difficulties, lowering the demands in terms of apartment square meters)
- The carefully planned distribution of the refugee population in city areas that are not overly-populated by refugees but are strategically located in areas with easy access to services and facilities.
- The introduction of a fast-track alternative application procedure called “Pre-approval Application of Appropriateness” and the support of the pertinent Municipal Department and the “Committee for the Appropriateness of Accommodation” in order to facilitate home-owners’ need to estimate their property’s monthly rent value before investing in the renovation of their apartments (i.e. painting, installing air-conditioning, restoring damages, etc.) and in the full application process and costly certificates.

[REACT website](#)

# MANAGING MIGRATION AS A NEW EXPERIENCE

## RIGA



The foreign-born population in Latvia numbers around 84,000, with the great majority living in Riga, where migrants make up about 12% of the city population. As a result of changes in Latvian immigration policy, which now allows temporary residence permits to be issued on the basis of financial investment in Latvia, the number of third country nationals with temporary residence permits trebled between 2009 and 2015. The most frequent grounds for residence of third-country nationals with temporary residence permit in Latvia are investments in real estate (49%), family reunion (19%), work in Latvia (13%) and studies at the Latvian higher educational establishments (8%). The number of foreign children in Riga is gradually increasing. The data for school year 2014/2015 shows that 1428 pupils from 55 countries were attending classes, out of which 1179 pupils were third country nationals. The biggest number of pupils was from: Russia (699), Ukraine (133), Lithuania (89) and Belorussia (80).

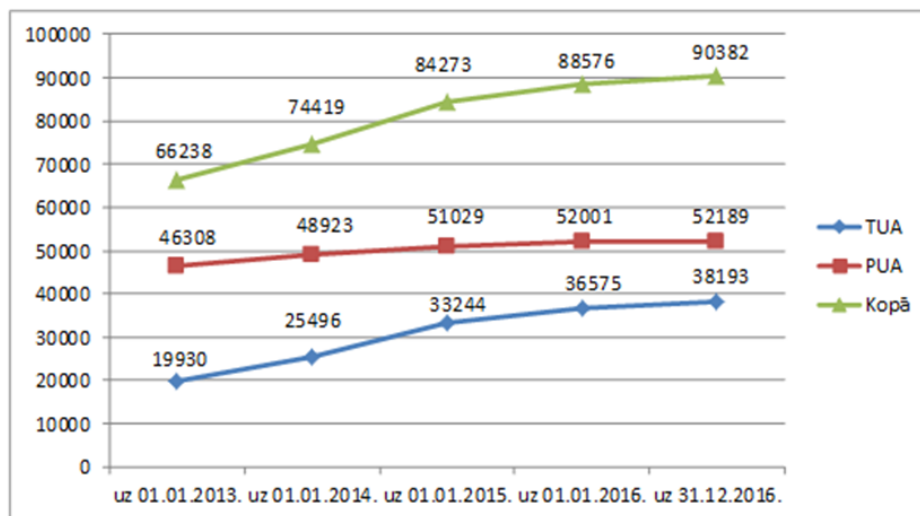


Diagram No. 1 Valid temporary residence permits (TUA) and permanent residence permits (PUA) 2013.–2016. (According to data of Citizenship and Migration Board).

**The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:**

- The results of Eurobarometer research in 2016 show that 51% of inhabitants of Latvia have negative attitude towards migration from the EU and 86% have negative attitude towards migration from the third countries. The research of Latvian Centre for Human Rights in 2016 show that 2/3 of foreign students who participated in the research (most of them live in Riga) have personally encountered the expressions of intolerance (verbal or physical) or were witnesses of such expressions. The results of numerous opinion polls show that negative attitudes from the Latvian public towards existing and potential immigrants are growing. One survey found that 78% of Latvians consider immigrants a very big threat, 65% consider immigrants as the bearers of non-traditional religions, 60% consider that immigrants bring alien culture and traditions and 53% think that immigrants foster mixed marriages with the representatives of new ethnic groups and visual minorities. Another survey showed that the majority of Latvians consider immigrants as a threat to the development of the state and of the local identity and immigrants from such regions were highlighted as not desirable: the Middle and Far East, as well China, North Africa and Central Asia.
- The lack of a coordinated service to manage migrant reception and information. The Municipality is in the process of establishing An Arrival Co-ordination Centre to manage the reception and settlement of newly arriving asylum seekers.
- As the results of the Research about Inclusion of Immigrant Children into School Processes in Riga conducted in 2014, showed that the number of pupils coming from other countries gradually increases, but the teachers are not ready to work with such pupils as they lack knowledge and skills on this topic and there is a lack of methodological materials on this topic.
- There is a lack of interest and unwillingness to integrate into Latvian society from some migrant populations, particularly from those who obtain residence permits through investment.
- The current situation with asylum seekers in Europe will have a direct effect on Riga. It is expected that Riga Municipality will have the main responsibility for integration and social inclusion of this group as the “Mucinieki” reception centre for asylum seekers is located in the neighbouring municipality, just 20 kilometres from Riga centre.

## INTERVIEW WITH IRINA VASILJEVA, LOCAL COORDINATOR OF THE ARRIVAL CITIES PROJECT



Irina works in the *the Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council*

### **What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

Riga does not have a long history of inward migration and the numbers that have arrived are still relatively small. However, there is considerable negativity towards migrants. Indeed migrants, who took part in the ULG highlighted the negative attitude that people displayed to them openly.

Latvia does not have any integration policy and it is not on the governments agenda and this also presents a challenge as obviously government funding for integration is very limited

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

Yes they have enriched the diversity of the city and this is reflected now in our schools and also in the types of cuisine that is available

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The biggest problem relates to what I have already said, namely a lack of commitment at national governmental level which results in a lack of resources and lack of co-ordination between different agencies.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

More direct financial support for cities to support projects that support integration and enable awareness raising campaigns at a local level.

## **What is Riga doing: A 360° approach targeted at key stakeholders?**

Taking into account the problems formulated the following two types of activities have been defined for the solution of the problems:

- Educational and informative activities about cultural diversity and migration (with a special focus on how to work with newcomers) for different groups: teachers, social workers, other service providers, pupils, students, inhabitants of Riga).
- Support activities for newcomers: information, Latvian language courses, cultural orientation courses and other support activities.

The following activities targeted at persons working with newcomers and inhabitants of Riga are planned for fostering of social integration:

- Latvian language courses for inhabitants of Latvia, including newcomers.
- Activities aimed at acquisition of Latvian language, in which representatives of different ethnic groups participate (for example, discussion clubs).
- Organization of explanatory, informative and support activities for newcomers (for example, integration courses), including preparation of informative materials on newcomers' topical issues in several languages (for example, in Russian, English, Arabic).
- Providing information to newcomers on the principles of NGO activity in Latvia and about minorities and other NGOs working with newcomers.
- Involvement of newcomers (especially young people) in different activities and events, especially as volunteers.
- Support for children - newcomers and schools (additional free language classes and other support).

## **Integration of IAP into City Integration Programme**

Since 2011 Riga City Council has started actively working on integration and migration issues. Riga City Society Integration Programme and action plan for years 2012–2017 has been elaborated. Migration is not put forward as a separate policy direction of the document, but the action plan has a number of activities aimed at informing inhabitants of Riga about the benefits and potential of migration for the host society as well as the activities targeted at the inclusion of newcomers – free Latvian language courses, cultural and educational activities for immigrants.

As the number of immigrants in Latvia and especially in Riga gradually increases, it is critical that the City Integration Programme is updated with targeted solutions which address migration and integration issues within Riga. The IAP will therefore be merged into the new Riga City Integration Programme.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

## Examples of some Action

### “Different people. Different experience. One Latvia”

The Municipality of Riga collaborated in the promotion of the campaign aimed at increasing public awareness on discrimination issues and to promote equality. Target groups of the project activities were the public institutions; civil society organizations (NGOs), high level public officials, journalists, PR and communication specialists, producers of mass media companies, judges, lawyers, prosecutors and advocates, schoolchildren and young people, school teachers, people experiencing discrimination, society in general.

During the campaign 7 video stories were produced on 6 grounds of discrimination by giving a voice to the representatives of discriminated groups. Video stories were broadcasted in social media, internet media, televisions, cinemas and had initiated intensive public discussions.

## MANAGING SOCIAL COHESION

### DRESDEN



The City of Dresden is a medium sized city in the East of Germany in the region of Saxony with a population of 557,098 inhabitants. 3, 8% of the present population in Dresden are Germans with a migrant background. Most of these migrants originate from the Russian Federation, China, Poland, Vietnam and Ukraine and to a lesser extent from Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey, and India. 6,8 % of the present population of Dresden are of foreign nationality. Altogether, foreigners and migrants make up 10,6 % of the Dresden population.

In order to cope with the influx of migrants and refugees since 2015, Germany has applied a distribution quota system among its federal entities. The City of Dresden has been allocated over 9000 refugees over a period of 4 years (2014-2018). Main countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Kosovo. While many refugees initially took the opportunity to later leave the city, more and more refugees have been opting to stay in Dresden longer-term.

While Dresden has unfortunately become known as the birthplace of PEGIDA in 2014 (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes - Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) and for its weekly far right marches, like in many cities across Europe large amounts of residents have mobilized to counter this animosity and to support and welcome the newcomers into the city. It is home to a range of community initiatives.

**The challenges concerning migration and integration faced by the City are:**

Initially the provision of shelter, food and first aid/medical assistance was a major short-term challenge for the municipality, particularly during 2015. This has involved multiple actors in the governance of migrant integration, coordination and effective cooperation at various governance levels (federal, regional and local) as well as inter-institutional coordination at city level. Now that a well-functioning governance system is in place for initial reception, the main challenges relate to longer-term integration.

Dresden faces integration challenges common to many cities such as:

- Lack of Data- the data on educational background, qualifications and skills of refugees is not easily available.
- Lack of language learning facilities- in particular scaling up the supply to meet the sudden rise in demand.
- Integration into the local labour market- Dresden's economy is strongly based on a highly skilled labour force. The labour market for less skilled workers is smaller compared to neighbouring cities in Saxony such as Leipzig.

However, one of the most pressing challenges for the city relates to a deterioration in social cohesion and increasing social polarization. Immigration into the city has been perceived as a threat by some residents with this view often reinforced and exploited by some news and social media. Dresden is well known as a hot bed of PEGIDA activity. Weekly anti-Islam and anti-migration protest movements developed into large scale regular demonstrations gathering at the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015 around 20 000 people. At the same time, the city has an active community of volunteers supporting migrant initiatives and intercultural activities. A representative study of the TU Dresden showed that a majority of the city's population- 56, 4%-affirmed the statement that refugees and migrants are not a threat to local culture and values.

The refugee crisis has split the local population of Dresden in an unprecedented way. At the same time, many refugees struggle with the process of integration and coming to terms with a new culture, norms and values. Indeed, members of the Arrival Cities Dresden Local Group have referred to a situation of 'culture shock' experienced by both the host community and arriving refugees.

As stated in the Integrated Action Plan, harnessing the diversity and creativity of the incoming population on the one hand, while ensuring security, social order and local values on the other hand, is one of the key challenges and tasks for Dresden's political, administrative and academic leadership as well as its local society in general for the coming years.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH MARK BLOCHER, HEAD OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE**



*Dr. Marcus Blocher was born in Stuttgart. After high school he studied political and administrative science in Konstanz (DE) and Louvain-la-Neuve (BE). He started his career at Horváth & Partners Management consultants in 1996 before moving on to work for the municipality of Ludwigsburg from 1998-2006 as head of office. He finished his PhD. in economic science from the University of Potsdam in 2005 and started to work as Head of Office in various thematic areas in the City of Dresden. Currently he is Head of the Mayor's office of the City of Dresden.*

#### **What are the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

The most important challenge is to mediate between the different cultures that are now living in the city. It is to overcome prejudices and invisible discrimination and fear that goes beyond the provision of structures and language courses.

Integration is a two-way process. It also demands something from the host society and host culture. To take care of those needs and fears and adapt our behaviour and thinking to this new situation is a challenge.

#### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

The arrival of such a big group of diverse people in the city has challenged the ways we do things. It has been a big effort, but the positive aspect is that it challenges us to do things in a new way and to look at things from a new perspective. It has shown that there is a big part of society that takes action when there is a need, while we have, of course, also those that are against immigration. Yet, one of the key questions that has been raised is „how do we want to live together in the future“. It is part of our city strategy to embed it into the core of our application to become European Capital of Culture in 2025, because we want to see how we can develop a new culture of engagement and living in the city in the future.



### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The biggest worry is to not be able to reach out to certain parts of migrant communities and the local society so that they feel isolated and develop negative thoughts and feelings towards the community they live in. If we do not manage to find positive narratives for them, I fear that tendencies for radicalisation and extremism find their breeding ground – be it on political, social or religious level.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

There needs to be a European solution to the issue of migration. It is a European and global phenomenon that won't go away in the near future. We need to be prepared to deal with it. We can do our best on local level to provide measures for integration, to provide housing, language courses and jobs. But, we work in a certain legal context that is not decided on local level, yet has an immense impact on our everyday life and actions. It is also for the EU to fight more against the causes for migration and flight.

## **WHAT IS DRESDEN DOING?**

### **Strategy documents:**

In terms of city strategy, the municipality has an Integration Concept for 2015-2020 which outlines the core values and overarching goals for the city in terms of integration- namely 'All immigrants should feel welcome and accepted in the City of Dresden. They should be able to grow and participate on an equal footing.'

- The city also has a Local Action Programme for a diverse and cosmopolitan Dresden: Promoting tolerance and democracy and fighting racism by the Municipality of Dresden for 2017-2022 With its Local Action Program for a diverse and cosmopolitan Dresden (LHP), the City of Dresden promotes civil society initiatives and activities.
- In addition, the Integrated Action Plan (IAP): Overcoming the lack of Community Cohesion produced through participation in Arrival Cities by a Local Group made up of Technical University Dresden, Municipality of Dresden, the Police, the Intercultural Muslim Centre and a number of other local actors identifies a number of new actions for the city.
- The city's current bid to become European City of Culture in 2025 is drawing from the challenge of the city's evolving identity and increasing diversity.

A wide variety of actions are currently undertaken to promote social cohesion and these include:

- Events- The city is home to a number of events which have a specific focus on diversity and intercultural sharing. This includes:
  - International Week against Racism- the municipality organizes an extensive programme of exhibitions, panel discussions, film screenings, readings, plays, lectures and workshops .
  - Intercultural Days is an annual city programme with over 140 events.
  - A festival dedicated to Inter religious Dialogue Interreligious organized by BIRD Bündnis Inter-Religiöses Dresden e.V. artists of different religions and worldviews play together and also perform in other arts. More at <http://festival.bird-dresden.de>
  - An annual Dresden Integration Award- This prize of EURO 5,000 for commitment to the integration of migrants and social cohesion is awarded by the Mayor.
- Organised and facilitated dialogues around the city- Citizen Dialogues have become an established part of Dresden’s local governance system as a means of broadening opportunities for citizens to participate in the democratic process. The city has actively embraced and promoted open dialogue as a way of reducing prejudices and increasing intercultural understanding. Dialogue initiatives include:
  - Hosting an event International Dresden Dialogue where mayors and community leaders from around Europe met with Dresden community leaders; ‘Gesprachsbereit
  - Hosting an event International Dresden Dialogue where mayors and community leaders from around Europe met with Dresden community leaders; ‘Gesprachsbereit
  - Dialogues in the streets
  - Dialogues organized through schools between parents of local and migrant backgrounds
  - Women-only dialogues
- Education programmes. Some examples include:
  - Special classes in schools to explore cultural identity- for example, international students and scientists from Technical University Dresden worked with pupils to explore the subject of identity and co-create and present a talk to the other pupils in the school
  - The ‘Little Globe’ kindergarten offers an intercultural nursery environment where children can communicate bilingually. About 63% of the children attending have migrant backgrounds.
  - In Dresden Ankommen- a student initiative at the Technical University Dresden which coordinates a language course and buddy programme for refugees, social and cultural events and the promotion of intercultural awareness amongst students.
- New projects: Some new projects outlined in the IAP, include:

- Police courses on intercultural competence
- a cultural evening programme
- a sport together programme
- a Neighbour day initiative
- several initiatives to promote cohesion within the Technical University Dresden.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

## Examples of some Actions

### CITIZEN DIALOGUES

During 2015-16, citizen dialogues were focused more specifically on the subject of migration and asylum. The aims of these citizen dialogues were to provide a platform for community cohesion and exchange; anticipate and de-escalate the tensions between local communities and refugee/immigrant communities.; and provide factual information about actual numbers and circumstances of refugees in Dresden. The dialogues took a variety of formats taking place in different locations and targeting different participants and communities in Dresden. A series of large-scale dialogues of up to 700 people took place in the central church Kreuzkirche which involved a number of keynote speeches and discussion time where participants could voice their concerns and ask questions. Additionally smaller neighbourhood level dialogues were organized facilitated by specially trained moderators.

### CULTURAL TRANSLATORS IN KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS

Many international scientists are based in Dresden with their families. This initiative has worked specifically with the wives/partners of scientists from overseas who have some capacity to work as cultural mediators in kindergartens and schools. They are able to provide vital classroom support to migrant children and act as translators to speak to them in their mother tongue when needed. The municipality support these women with gaining qualifications and further employment in the area of education.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Photo by Desdener Suden <https://www.sz-online.de/sachsen/dresden/?pubdate=02.05.2015>

## PATRAS



Patras is Greece's third largest city. The city is capital of the Achaia prefecture and the metropolitan centre of the region of Western Greece, regarded as the "gate" of the country to the West. Currently, migrants make up around 5% of the Patras population. The main settled migrant populations are from Albania (who make up over 60% of the migrant population), Romania, Bulgaria, India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus as well as Latin America. Most of them have formed and operate Associations which organise events and co-create at local level with other Patras stakeholders.

Patras was a transit route for migrants arriving in Europe via the Greek islands and then travelling through Greece and Italy up to northern Europe. This transit route is no longer used since new routes through the Balkans opened up. Most of the asylum seekers who had been in Patras (some for a few years) have now moved on. However, around 1,000 undocumented migrants (teenagers and young adult men mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kurdish) remain stranded in Patras. They are living in temporary camps within the city and are unemployed, destitute and some homeless. The Municipality cannot provide services for undocumented migrants, since it has neither the resources nor the authority for this. However, believing in solidarity and human values, provides food, clothing, water, medical support and other assistance to people in most need. In parallel, civil society representatives and volunteers provide their own help.

### **The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:**

Promoting the benefits and success of diversity;

Recording and profiling migrant cultural capital as well as promoting their success stories in society;

Enhancing integrated mediation services provided by community people;

Enriching intercultural competences of field professionals (civil society representatives, local authorities & community organizations) through training;

Combating negative rumors, stereotyping and discrimination, particularly amongst young people;

Working within severe financial constraints (Greek municipalities have had a 40% cut to their budgets since 2015). All migrant integration initiatives require external funding for implementation.

Building an inclusive society without racism is regarded as a priority at local level.

The Municipality of Patras is strongly committed to principles of equality and anti-discrimination and wants to incorporate these principles into all service areas of the Municipality and as a basis of cooperation with other stakeholders. For example, the Municipality gives priority to vulnerable populations, which include migrants, and addresses matters of equality, solidarity and diversity through actions of its organisations (such as DYPETHE-Municipal & Regional Theatre of Patras, Social Welfare Municipal Organisation, Patras Cultural Organisation, etc.).

#### INTERVIEW WITH VASILEIOS THOMOPOULOS VICE MAYOR OF PATRAS



*Vasileios THOMOPOULOS was born in Patras in 1983 and raised in Nafpaktos, a picturesque coastal town of Etoloakarnania (Western Greece). He holds a degree as Computer Engineer of the University of Patras. He has been a very active citizen at an early stage and involved in politics at Patras Municipal level. Since 2014, he has been the President of Patras Cultural Organisation and since 2018 he is additionally involved as Patras Vice-Mayor of "Environment, Energy and Programming"*

**What are the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

-Tackling rumours, stereotypes and discrimination.

It is of vital importance to use communication means and social networks and viral information channels to provide correct information and explanations on migration and diversity and combat unfounded (but widespread) myths and misconceptions, that put social cohesion at risk.

-Design and implement synergy schemes with natives and migrants involved

Building an inclusive society is a never-ending effort that should be based on a participatory way of co-creation among all citizens (young included) by respecting human rights, equality and the diversity advantage.

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

Patras has been a cross-road of civilizations since ancient times and is grateful for its intercultural character. In this sense, migrants have brought new ideas, they have supported civil society operation through their associations which are actively involved in related initiatives, they have contributed to labour market (and especially in hard type of jobs), they have enriched the cultural product through festivals and festivities.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The continuous long-term economic crisis in Greece (and in Patras) has increased unemployment significantly. Labour market has minimized for all, natives and migrants and this is a “favourable” ground for hate speech to grow. Therefore, encouraging new opportunities for job creations is of vital importance for quality of life, taking into consideration to maintaining a peaceful spirit through implementing synergy schemes of activities, is a challenge

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures ?**

The EU plays a significant role worldwide and its migration policy should be more clearly addressed at local level by insisting in a bottom-up approach. Such an approach should safeguard the incorporation of recommendations of local governments into national policies. Obviously, encouraging the participatory model of working that has proved to be effective and linking it with adequate sources of funding for local stakeholders to perform, is a guarantee for successful outcomes.

### **What is the City Doing?**

**An Integrated IAP.** The main objectives of the IAP are:

Organization of reception and improvement of support services for smooth social integration.

Improve access to basic goods such as housing, health and education.

Promoting employment and supporting the mobility of migrant workers.

Strengthening the intercultural competences of professionals in the field of migration.

Managing and highlighting interculturalism.

Development of joint actions among local actors to highlight the importance of unity, against discrimination and stereotypes.

Combating xenophobia and racism.

Development of cultural and educational actions with emphasis on women and young people

Read the full IAP [here](#)

## Examples of some Actions

### “Patras Park of Educational Activities”

The Municipality has recently developed a new structure, “Patras Park of Educational Activities” that acts as a hub for educational and cultural activities, particularly for young people, including migrants. The Park has opened on February 2016 and is linked to other youth initiatives already taking place in the city by the Municipality and local stakeholders – this networking is a dynamic process in progress. During summertime, it hosts summer camps on weekly basis targeting enjoyable exploitation of time for children of vulnerable groups (migrants included).



### Mediation Office

The Municipality has been operating a Mediation Office (MO) which provides information and services for people in need which is currently being transforming into the city’s Community Centre (it is a new structure funded through the Operational Plan of the Region of Western Greece by ESF). Until now, about 40% of the MO service users are migrants. There is a strong focus on actions to promote intercultural understanding, including through a series of projects to train inter-cultural mediators and professionalize this role, and through many projects which have brought migrant and Greek communities together through cultural events, awareness campaigns and educational activities.

## MANAGING LOCAL CO-ORDINATION

### VANTAA



Vantaa has a higher proportion of migrant residents than any other municipality in Finland. The city's 30,000 plus migrants represent about 14% of the total population. The main migrant populations are from Russia, Estonia, Somalia, Albania, Vietnam and Arabic countries.

Vantaa is dealing with new challenges from the rapid increase in new arrivals with greater numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Finland, alongside the old challenges of supporting successful integration of migrants into Vantaa's education system, workforce and society.

The number of people seeking asylum has increased hugely in the last years. In 2014, Finland received about 3,000 asylum seekers. In 2015, more than 30,000 asylum applications have been received. Of these, about 30-40% will be granted. Vantaa is not equipped to support asylum seekers on this scale. The municipality is currently accommodating 1,100 asylum seekers in four reception centres and is expecting more to arrive soon. Many of these new arrivals are from Iraq.

#### **The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:**

- Barriers to employment. Finnish employers barely take on people who don't have good Finnish language skills, even for basic jobs where few language skills are required. This means that migrants can have to spend months or years learning to speak Finnish before they can work.



- Negative perceptions of migrants, racism and prejudice. There has been increasing hostility towards migrant populations, including racist attacks. Hostility is particularly directed at Muslim communities. These negative attitudes are being expressed at many levels, including by some politicians, in the mainstream media and through social networks.
- Lack of social cohesion, networks and friendships. Integration initiatives have tended to focus on the migrant population and more is needed to build stronger bonds between migrant and Finnish communities.
- Tension between settled migrant and newly arriving migrant communities. There are concerns from established migrant groups that the scale of new arrivals will mean that the focus for support shifts away from tackling the on-going difficulties for settled migrants. There are also fears that because many new arrivals are highly educated, this will have a negative impact on job opportunities for settled migrants, creating even greater barriers for labour market inclusion.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH FAYSAL ABDI, VANTAA CITY COUNCILLOR AND MEMBER OF THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE BOARD**



*Faysal Abdi is a member of Vantaa's city council since 2013. Currently, he is also a member of the City's Executive Board – the board is responsible for preparing and implementing the council's decision and monitoring their legality.*

#### **What are the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

Vantaa has the highest foreign language speakers in Finland (almost 18%) and this continuously brings challenges in the way our basic services are organized in the City. The first important challenge is the migrants' access to the labor market. The second challenge is that due to the high cost of living in Finland, how can we ensure that migrants with low income households can have access to reasonable housing in various areas of the city.

#### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city ?**

Vantaa is generally called the laboratory of integration in Finland. By doing things together, migrants in Vantaa boost a sense of community in the city.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants ?**

Finland is currently undergoing a structural reform – the possibility of social and health, as well as regional reform in the coming years brings uncertainties to all the different sectors. I have some concerns about how issues and services regarding migrant integration will be addressed in the future.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

EU should definitely try to listen more and be in dialogue with the cities. In concrete terms, EU can give more attention to transnational learning and networking, where various cities can learn from each other's' good practices. Arrival Cities has been an excellent experience for us, and we are looking forward to having more opportunities like this.

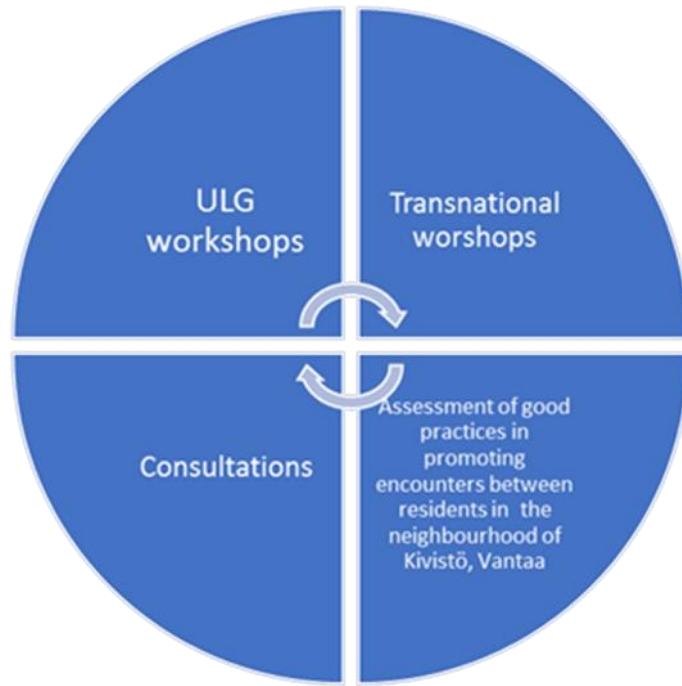
### **What is the Municipality doing to address the challenges it faces?**

In the provision of integration services, the city has had a long history of cooperation with different sectors, i.e., non-government organizations, the church, civil societies, as well as the private sector. Promoting partnerships and cooperation is a very important strategy of the City, not only due to the limited resources available, but most importantly, the City has a firm strategy of fostering social innovation. While all sectors are encouraged to employ the complementary principle in the provision of integration services and activities, it still remains to be a challenge to develop synergies and find common goals between the different sectors.

Addressing this challenge became the main focus of the IAP

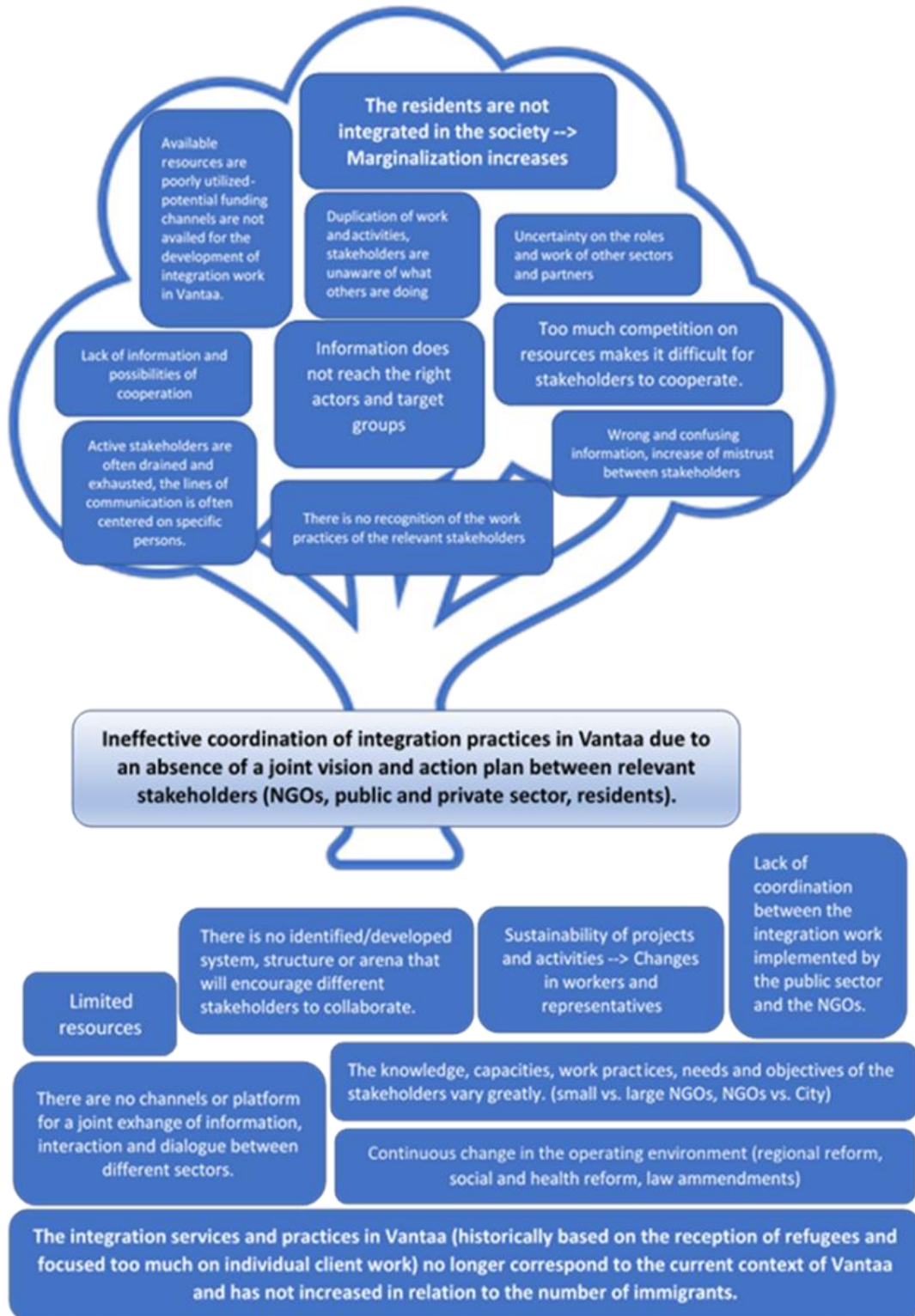
### **A Strong Co-creation focus in development of their IAP**

Vantaa's ULG is composed of highly inclusive, multi-sectoral stakeholders, bringing their diverse expertise and knowledge on the theme of migration and integration. In selecting the possible ULG members, priority was given to migrant-led, non-government organizations in Vantaa. This was to ensure that the process of developing the integrated action plan would focus on the grassroots level information as well as the current context of integration in the city.



Read the full IAP [here](#)

A deep analysis and diagnosis



## Examples of some Actions

### "Commodification of local NGOs integration services"

The idea of this project is to provide training and acceleration programs for local NGOs to transform their existing integration activities into marketable and sellable services to the public and private sectors. This idea is in response to the possible regional, social and health reform in Finland.

### Developing "Our Vantaa" network of volunteer workers and organizations.

"Our Vantaa" idea is a result of the first ULG workshop. The goal is to develop a joint strategy and model for volunteer work in the city. The network consists of non-government organizations, city officials, church representatives and volunteers.

The network organizes "järjestötreffit" (organization meet-up) 2 -3 times a year, with different themes, i.e., developing a joint training program for volunteer workers in Vantaa.

## OLDENBURG



Oldenburg is a city located in the northwest of Lower Saxony, Germany. It has a population of approximately 166,000 people and just under 23 percent (39,000) of them have what is known as a migrant background, including approximately 9 percent (14,900) non-German citizens.

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<sup>4</sup> Photo (upper part) by Padberg Nils

Though a small city, Oldenburg possesses a global network due to emigration, immigration and trade. This is reflected in the population as well- Oldenburg is home to people from over 140 nations.

Over 4,400 refugees have been assigned to the city of Oldenburg since 2010. They include more than 2,000 Iraqi nationals, the majority of them members of the Yazidi community, as well as approximately 1,000 Syrians. During the peak periods, 1,400 people were cared for simultaneously in municipal reception centres and decentralised housing facilities. During 2017, approximately 80 percent of the applications for asylum were approved. Since the end of 2017, the State of Lower Saxony has virtually stopped assigning refugees to Oldenburg and as of early 2018, around 530 refugees remained in central or decentralised municipal accommodation facilities.

A high degree of civic engagement in municipal life is a particular quality of Oldenburg. Volunteering, civic associations and an active commitment to communal life are characteristic of the city's political and collective self-perception and there has been a sharp rise since the recent influx of refugees. Oldenburg has been particularly successful in the local coordination of services, local stakeholders and actors and improvement of local coordination remains of high priority.

### **The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:**

The four overarching challenges Oldenburg faces in terms of migration and integration are the following:

-Coordination of services for the life-cycle from arrival to longer-term integration- this is a strategic challenge and involves making sure that the many services which support integration at different times and in different ways closely work together. In turn, Municipal integration policies need to reflect and respond to practical experiences on the ground and be adjusted in response to changing circumstances and need.

-Coordination of volunteers and volunteer organisations- in a culture of independent volunteering it is a challenge tracking what is happening and where the gaps are- the challenge is how to coordinate the work of numerous volunteers with municipal departments and other organisations without inhibiting their personal autonomy, motivation and passion.

-How to co-create integration- new formats for planning and communication are needed to ensure collaborative partnerships between the extremely varied actors. Besides promoting dialogue between professionals and volunteers, it is important to integrate newly arrived migrants within the existing structures.

-How to strengthen anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts in the face of resurgent resentment and animosity towards refugees and migrant populations.

## INTERVIEW WITH NILS PADBERG, LOCAL COORDINATOR OF THE ARRIVAL CITIES PROJECT



*Nils Padberg has worked as local coordinator for ARRIVAL CITIES at the City of Oldenburg's Department of Immigration and Integration since early 2017. Born in 1986, he studied both Sociology and Urban and Regional Development at the University of Bremen and worked for different NGOs*

### **What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

Integration work in Oldenburg during the last few years necessarily had a strong focus on the reception of refugees. Both the municipality and the active and helpful citizens of Oldenburg did a very good job in this, but now we have to manage the even more difficult transition from mere arrival to integration and participation in all aspects of society. Also we have to coordinate the manifold work of the professional and voluntary actors to create synergies and to secure and further develop many of the great projects and ideas that were established over the last few years.

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

Oldenburg is a city with lots of experience with immigration and also with refugees. That surely is part of why the Oldenburg citizens have proven so welcoming in the last years. Immigrants not only helped to rebuild the German economy in the past, but immigration, diversity and fresh ideas will also prepare Oldenburg for the future in our growing together world. I guess that most Oldenburg citizens embrace that.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

To ensure the future successful integration of immigrants, we have to draw inspiration from both the lapses of past integration policies and the successful and proven strategies. Also this cannot be done on the national level alone. In light of a rise of exclusivist voices all across Europe, it is very important to internationally share experiences on both good practices and problems encountered, to develop suitable integration policies for all EU member states.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

I think the approach taken by URBACT is a very good start. To connect cities from all over Europe, let them exchange knowledge and experiences. And support them to „think global and act local“. Not only on a monetary base, but also with professional expertise and counsel.

### **What is the Municipality doing to address the challenges it faces?**

Oldenburg adopted its first municipal integration concept entitled “At home. Building diversity together!” in 2010. The concept defines ‘integration’ for the city and provides key data demonstrating that foreign nationals are at a clear disadvantage compared to German nationals in the areas of qualification, training and job market situation and levels of poverty.

### **The City of Oldenburg Integrated Action Plan ‘Shaping. Oldenburg. Together’**

This integrated action plan is the first step in producing a comprehensive updated concept for integration in Oldenburg. It contains the preliminary ideas and most important points of orientation. The IAP is the result of a programme of public participation workshops carried out within the framework of the Arrival Cities network and partnerships formed through the ULG in Oldenburg.

### **In response to the city’s challenges, the IAP sets out four strategic objectives with a set of actions linked to each objective:**

- Opening up and adapting the municipal administration to the requirements of a modern ‘migration society’- This involves human resources training and policy, developing cross-cultural competences and ensuring barrier-free access to information and services. This involves actions to increase the number of city administration employees with a migrant background, such as providing vocational training at and in collaboration with the migrant associations. Strengthening cross-cultural competencies within city administration through expanding training opportunities for staff and trainees; ensuring better accessibility to public information and services through better multilingual support.
- Expanding and diversifying the existing German language learning offer- Actions include making courses more accessible such as providing daycare facilities and making them available to all immigrants (including those with low probability of gaining a residence permit).
- Strengthening social cohesion- A key aim is to intensify networking between the Department of Integration, Community centres, Youth centres and other agencies to coordinate and promote cross-cultural offer. Another action is to better communicate local values and norms such as gender equality and democratic core values to newcomers.
- Labour market integration- Creating lower threshold career and education advice based in places where migrants commonly frequent. Developing better support and mentorship for entrepreneurial migrants looking to set of a business, in particular providing guidance around the German legal system.



- Strengthening civic actors within integration work- This involves strengthening networks and communication within and between civic actors. To better link voluntary workers to municipal activity there are practical actions including providing transparent and direct contact links to municipal officers and departments and creating information portals on relevant services and cultural offers. In terms of empowering migrant organisations, actions include support for capacity building such as professionalizing organisations, project funding, and project management.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

### **Examples of some Actions**

#### **The Office of Migration and Integration for Oldenburg**

The Office of Migration and Integration was established on 1 August 2017 as a strategic implementation entity. The Office is divided into the Department of Integration and the Department of Central Refugee Management. Establishment of the Office pooled competencies and responsibilities from eight different departments, with the aim of positioning migration and integration as a cross-sectoral task. The former Mayor's Integration Unit with its just two employees has evolved into an entire Office with over forty staff members that cater to an entire range of integration tasks. Integration work is no longer a peripheral issue and has instead become an established and embedded part of the city administration.

Compared to other municipalities in Germany, a particular feature of the Office for Migration and Integration is its direct responsibility for integration social work. This ensures that a direct and strong contact is immediately established with newly arrived migrants.

#### **Coordination of Labour Market and Employment Services**

Oldenburg has an efficient and joined up approach to support education and training progression into employment. The networks in this sector are operating at all levels, from volunteers to professionals and coordinate to ensure that different roles that they play are complementary. The local branch of the Federal Employment Agency and the municipal Jobcenter provide services to assist newly arrived migrants. Stand-alone initiatives like the pro:connect association bring together employers and job-seekers and significantly is led by companies and the private sector in coordination with the municipality and other organisations. Pro:connect has enabled companies to become more proactive in the wider process of integration of immigrants and refugees into the Oldenburg area.

## ROQUETAS DE MAR



Roquetas de Mar is a municipality located in the south of Almería province in the region of Andalucía, Spain. The municipality is 60 square km in size and has experienced rapid population growth in recent decades from 28,000 inhabitants in 1990 to 97,100 inhabitants in January 2018. This growth has been stimulated by economic growth in intensive agriculture (the region is home to the so called 'plastic sea'- intensive agriculture under extensive plastic greenhouses) and tourism. As a result of these industries, the population highly fluctuates and in summer the population can reach circa 250,000.

Roquetas de Mar has become one of the main settlement areas for migrants in Spain. The sharp rise in population has been a partly the result of high immigration levels of people from outside Spain- primarily from Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. Migrants have been attracted by the economic pull factors of a thriving agricultural and tourism economy. Many are also in Roquetas de Mar seeking the right to family reunion. The current foreign born population is at 27,454, nearly 30% of the population, composed of over a 100 nationalities.

The main EU migrant population originates from Romania and third party migrants originate from Senegal, Morocco, Mali, Guinea Bissau and Ghana. There has been considerable effort to develop coordinated services which are best suited to this diverse and dynamic demographic. The Municipal Office for Immigration was created in 1997 to lead on migrant integration policy and provide integration support services. The overarching goal in Roquetas de Mar is to eliminate inequalities between the migrant and Spanish populations through working in a coordinated way between departments and different organisations.

### **The main challenges faced by Roquetas de Mar have been identified as the following:**

- Marginalisation and residential segregation of immigrant communities
- Language and cultural barriers to integration
- Absenteeism and underachievement of immigrants within education

-‘Double discrimination’ and the particular issues face by female immigrants

## **INTERVIEW WITH JOSE GALDEANO ANTEGUERA, COUNCILLOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES OF ROQUETAS DE MAR**



*José Galdeano Antequera, Councillor of Social Services – Municipality of Roquetas de Mar (Spain). Born 1953 in Albuñol (Granada) is also a long term migrant in the city. He has been councillor of agriculture between 1991 and 1999, and since 2003 till now, he is responsible of the social policies of the city. He has been directly involved in several European Initiatives and Programs related to migrants’ integration such as EQUAL, INTI or URBACT.*

### **What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

The lack of awareness of the meaning of belonging to the society of reception, not only among newcomers, but especially in the case of those neighbours from migrant environments with stable residence (long-term or permanent) in the city.

Insufficient resources that would allow you to promote the knowledge of language and culture of the host city to the migrant population.

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

There are several ones. The most important may be its workforce, the population growth seen as an asset for their rejuvenation and urban development.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

The creation of opportunities and jobs for the next generations.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

A Common European legislation in the field of integration of migrants that allow as far as possible prevent crises such as the one created in the Mediterranean Sea since 2015 would be of great help.

Contrasted or innovative actions and measures that improve the integration of migrants in our cities.

### **What is the Municipality doing to address the challenges it faces?**

The Integrated Action Plan for Roquetas de Mar developed through Arrival Cities sets out the city's strategy and actions and was adopted in May 2018. The Local Group formed to co-create this IAP will continue to guide the implementation of activities. The plan is governed by a number of guiding principles:

- Community lead initiative- working through community structures, the community must determine and own the process
- Having a gender-based approach
- Building on existing local assets and opportunities
- Reducing inequality
- Valuing diversity

The city has a strong structural base for local coordination and local participation to build on in order to implement future actions. It has a number of forums dedicated to the coordination of local services such as the Forum for integration and Citizenship and the Health Commission (see below for more details).

In addition to the integration work carried out through these forums, the IAP identifies a number of new initiatives which will be implemented over the coming years:

### **Asset Mapping**

Drawing on the methodology of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) an asset mapping exercise will collect robust information and data. This collective resource and knowledge will form the basis upon which actors working on immigration matters can plan activities. A key component of this information gathering is to work with community members to identify strengths and opportunities as a basis for change. This process involves the identification and training of key informants/researchers, field work in the community, development of web tools to support the project and an ongoing process of updating information to reflect the dynamic and changing landscape of demographics and community priorities etc.

### **Education and Training programmes:**

- For municipal staff and agencies working with immigrants-The municipality aims to implement a programme of bi-monthly training activities focused on cultural diversity and intercultural communication.

-For immigrant associations- based on peer-peer education and cascade training methodologies, the aim is to provide all 'leaders' of different communities of immigrants with training to become trainers within their communities and provide them with the tools to help support their communities.

-For immigrant community members who are outside of the education system- building on the existing programme of Spanish learning, this involves the provision of additional training opportunities such as IT skills.

-For young people at risk of absenteeism and underachievement- the provision of extra coaching based on the IBIS Tutoring programme, Oldenburg.

### **Integrated Neighbourhood Intervention- the 200 Homes project:**

In order to tackle spatial inequalities, the city is undertaking an integrated community development and regeneration project focused on a distinct community with higher levels of deprivation and social exclusion. This involves creating a team of multidisciplinary staff to augment established social services and focus more intensively on supporting the local community.

### **Establishment of a city centre intercultural facility**

This venue will act as a multifunctional hub for the municipality and other actors to carry out coordinated activities. The facility will have a specific focus on young people and immigrants. This centre will incorporate elements of projects discovered through Arrival Cities- namely the Repair Café and Youth Social Centre in Oldenburg.

### **Multicultural education and Awareness Campaigns-**

The city will design and implement an annual programme of activities with a special focus on young people.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

### **Examples of some Actions**

#### **The Forum for Integration and Citizenship**

The Forum for Integration and Citizenship was established as a mechanism for all agents and organisations involved in migration management in the municipality to come together, discuss and input into policy and activity. It also coordinates the social integration of third country migrants and EU citizens staying in Roquetas de Mar. It's overarching objective is to support the integration of migrants as new citizens who actively take part in all areas of economic, cultural,

civic and social life within the municipality. A key role is to enable greater democracy in the development of programmes and actions and strengthen the agency of immigrant associations (as representative of their communities) in local democracy. The forum holds at least 2 meetings a year with all its members which involves reviewing the current situation and actions taken by the municipality. It also involves reviewing and evaluating municipal plans for the future and therefore influencing and making recommendations for future action.

### **The Health Commission**

The Health Commission is an example of strategic joined up working across the municipality of Roquetas de Mar to provide appropriate and accessible health services to migrants- both established and newly arrived. It was formed in 2008 and is made up of 5 city councils, 7 NGOs, migrants associations and health care professionals. It acts as a central communication hub to coordinate initiatives, share information, develop ideas, co-create strategies and exploit the synergies between the different organisations. The commission has developed a number of initiatives to join up health promotion with other migrant integration work. In particular it has focused on improving migrant access to health programmes, health education and supporting migrant women in vulnerable situations. Examples of projects include incorporating health education as part of Spanish lesson programmes and the training health agents and developing action plans to deal with different aspects of health.

## **PROMOTING RIGHTS AND EQUALITY**

### **AMADORA**

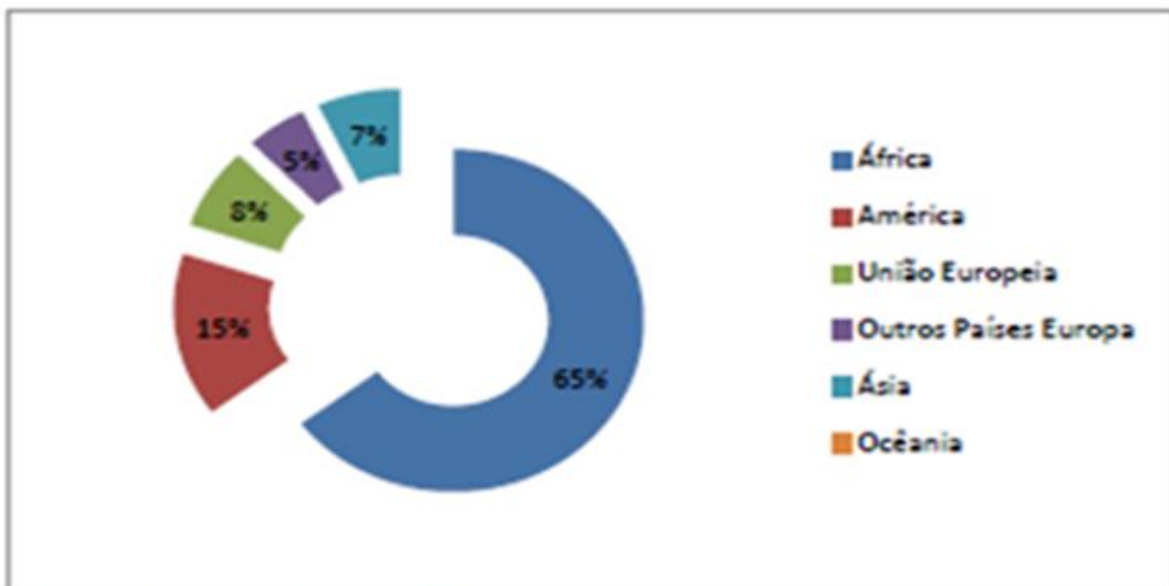


Amadora is the Lead Partner of the Arrival Cities project. According to the 2011 Census, the city has the largest migrant population in Portugal. Around 33,000 immigrants live in Amadora, making up 18% of the population born abroad Portugal and 10% with foreign nationality. The

main migrant populations are from: Cape Verde 37%; Brazil 17%; Guinea Bissau 12%; Angola 7%; Sao Tome and Principe 6%. In Amadora, 14.4% of children in schools have a different nationality (of which 72% are African).

**The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the municipality are:**

- Housing facilities: Housing costs are very high in Amadora and there is a lack of affordable housing for lower waged workers. A government re-housing programme to move people out of illegal settlements was initiated in 1991 and is still in progress but some families are still waiting.
- The unemployment rate in Amadora is 15% overall but higher for people born outside Portugal (20.5%). Widespread unemployment was precipitated by the collapse of the construction sector during the 2008/09 global economic crisis, affecting in particular migrants mostly employed in this sector.
- Poor sense of belonging. Second and third generation migrants often feel that they do not belong to Portuguese society. It is recognised that children with migrant backgrounds are not performing well in the school system and do not achieve higher level qualifications. The more limited opportunities experienced by young people contribute to this poor sense of belonging.
- Negative stereotyping by the media (migrants are often portrayed as criminals) and poor public perceptions of migrants.



Fonte: Portal de Estatística do SEF

## INTERVIEW WITH CARLA TAVARES, MAYOR OF AMADORA



*Carla Tavares is Mayor of Amadora since October 2013, where she was also a Councilor and Deputy Mayor from 2002 to 2013, responsible for education, social development, sport, youth, human resources and finance. She was Deputy of the Assembly of the Republic, from 1999 to 2002, and was member of the Parliamentary Committees on Youth and Sports and on Parity, Equal Opportunities and Family. Graduated in Management from the Autónoma University of Lisbon, she was Financial Broker at Caixa Banco Investimento between 1993 and 2002.*

### **What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

Access to the labour market - In Amadora, foreigners represents the majority of the workers, semi-skilled or unskilled, having noticed that as the level of expertise increases the representativeness of immigrants' decreases.

Education - Evaluating school success and failure, has been noted that the retention rate of foreign students is higher than that of Portuguese students.

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

I would say Amadora was "encouraged" to be open to the world, regarding the expectations of a culturally diverse population. The foreign population in Amadora represents about 9% of the total resident population, distributed by 99 different nationalities. But if we consider the nationality and the place of birth of the residents this percentage rises to about 18%.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

Since migratory movements are mostly of economic origin, the integration process should focus on the areas of employment, education and training. And not forgetting that in an increasingly global world people should be prepared to discuss their fears and concerns, a way to demystify prejudices and prevent discriminatory attitudes. Schools, places of worship, municipal libraries, neighbourhood associations, etc., are good places to do it.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

With cities at the forefront of receiving and welcoming refugees and migrants, the EU can catalyse efforts between different levels of governance by encouraging a bottom-up approach. The priorities of the forthcoming new EU Community framework should clearly reflect this approach, both to deal with exceptional migratory situations and to value already settled



immigrants and their descendants, providing equal opportunities and economic development in the territories where they live.

### **What is the Municipality doing to address the challenges it faces?**

Given its huge diversity, it is not surprising that Amadora had already in 2015 developed its first Municipal Plan for the Integration of Immigrants. (MPII). Through the work undertaken by the URBACT Local Group (ULG) as part of developing an Integrated Action Plan (IAP), the first MPII served as a benchmark for reviewing its impact and also developing a second version for the period 2018-2020.

### **An IAP well embedded**

One of the key requirements for ensuring an integrated approach at local level is to embed the IAP within existing mechanisms. So the MPII has been:

Approved by the municipal executive as part of a public board meeting

Approved by the Amadora Social Network, which is part of the Local Council for Social Action which brings together 38 representatives of the local organizations and is chaired by the deputy mayor.

Linked to the Municipal Plan for Health and Social development 2018-2025.

### **The IAP has four main axis of action:**

Services for migrants' integration and solidarity. The main needs identified by immigrants and by stakeholders were: the need to gain access to clear information concerning legalization procedures.

Employment, education and professional skills & job training. Regarding employment the main problems identified by immigrants are also related to securing the necessary documentation which is fundamental for full access to the labour market. Concerning education the main problems identified were the early school leaving, lack of family resources, excessive concentration of children of immigrants in certain schools and lack of resources and skills of schools to deal with students of different cultural backgrounds.

Culture, Citizenship and Participation. The main problems identified are related to the lack of visibility of the activities carried out by the communities and the reduced cooperation between institutions. There is also a lack of knowledge about existing activities and resources directed to the communities, suggesting the need to reinforce information so that people can have greater involvement and participation.

Media and public opinion awareness-raising. Amadora continues to suffer from negative media stereotypes and there is need to reinforce actions already taken to counter these.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

### Examples of some Actions



### “DO NOT FEED THE RUMORS CAMPAIGN”

This campaign has been developed as part of the Communication for Integration Project that was focused on fighting misconceptions, prejudices, rumours and stereotypes using viral information techniques to provide answers based on evidence for common errors. The Communication for Integration Project was conducted by the Council of Europe, and involved the transference of an innovative social communication & networking method inspired by the ‘anti-rumours’ campaign initiated by the Barcelona City Council in 2010. The involved 10 partner cities – Amadora, Barcelona, Bilbao, Botkyrka, Erlangen, Limerick, Loures, Lublin, Nuremberg, Patras and Sabadell.

The [campaign description](#), the [Facebook Page](#) and below two videos realised for the campaign.

VIDEO : [Do not feed the rumour](#)

VIDEO: [Não alimente o Rumor - promover a multiculturalidade e combater estereótipos](#)

## VAL DE MARNE



5

*"At a time when individualism tends to refer everyone to their own responsibility in their paths, we want to debate the ambition to better bring together our fellow citizens to enable them to achieve greater autonomy. In Val-de-Marne, all solidarities are at the heart of public policies."*

*Christian Favier, President of the Conseil départemental du Val-de-Marne*

Val-de-Marne is a County-level authority covering the south east suburbs of Paris and within the Ile-de-France region of France. The main responsibilities at County-level are for social affairs (including child welfare, maternal health, and support for senior citizens, and social inclusion for people with disabilities), education, culture, sports and road maintenance for the 47 municipalities that compose the Val-de-Marne county. Val-de-Marne is called "Water County" since the Seine on 15 kilometres and the Marne cross it on 24 kilometres and, in total, 96 kilometres of rivers drain the territory, with 8 main rivers. It is also a leading producer of geothermal energy as well as leading agribusiness producer.

Migrants (people born outside French territory coming to live permanently in France) make up 20% of the population of Val de Marne county. This is considerably higher than the average of 8.8% across France and higher than the 18% average within the Ile-de-France region. The main countries or origin for migrants in Val-de Marne are the Maghreb countries (29% of migrants, the majority from Algeria and Morocco), other African countries (19%), Asian countries (18%) and other EU countries (27%). While men are largely in the majority of immigrants who have

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<sup>5</sup> Painting by Fred Kleinberg - Odyssea

arrived since 40 years or more, feminization has increased and women, as in the population as a whole, are in the majority of the entire immigrant population.

**The main challenges concerning migration and integration facing the county are:**

- Ensuring equal access to public services for everyone;
- Countering negative perceptions and attitudes to migration; promoting the fight against all forms of discrimination and exclusion; challenging negative stereotypes of migrants; promoting the benefits of diversity
- Building a common understanding of the challenges and of the roles and responsibilities at different levels (State, Department, Municipality);
- Improving co-ordination of the different actions which are already taking place to gain better understanding of where there may be gaps, avoiding duplication of existing services, building better links and synergies between support initiatives;
- Identifying and sharing good practice between agencies.
- Supporting the emancipation and empowerment of migrant populations means changing the way one looks at the other, the foreigner, the migrant. It means recognizing and valuing what migrant women and men are and what they have brought and continue to bring to Val-de-Marne society. It is to integrate the right to culture as the recognition of everyone as a carrier and relay of cultures.

**INTERVIEW WITH FATHIA AGGOUNE, VICE PRESIDENT OF DEPARTMENTAL COUNCIL OF VAL-DE-MARNE**



*I was born on May 10, 1976 in Paris. Inhabitant of Gentilly, val-de-marnaise since always. I am a territorial employee and elected Communist since 2015 in the Department of Val-de-Marne. The issues of social, territorial and gender inequalities have always been at the heart of my political and civic commitment.*

**What the two most important difficulties you are facing in managing the integration of migrants?**

The two main difficulties are employment and housing.

These difficulties are of course common to all citizens from Val-de-Marne. However, these are even more difficult regarding their integration. They go together and one does not go without

the other unfortunately. On average, immigrants have a monthly income of 30% less than the income of non-immigrants; as many difficulties that are related to barriers to entry into the labor market, professional deskilling, more precarious work contracts...

### **Are there any benefits that migrants have brought to your city?**

The department of Val-de-Marne is a local Authority gathering 47 municipalities on 250km of surface. The welcome of the people of the world is a wealth for our country and our department. The Department is a land of welcome and solidarity, solidarity that is also at the heart of our public policies. In June 2016, the community adopted new directions for the implementation of its international action, reaffirming the core values of its intervention: social justice, equality, freedom, culture of peace, human rights, solidarity and protection of the planet.

### **What is your biggest worry in respect to successfully integrating the migrants?**

Welcoming migrants with dignity, access to rights, the right to mobility, social integration, the language barrier, the unemployment rate, financial stakes and procedural burdens. A reflection on the rise of extremism, in connection with the fear of the other, the unknown and the spread of received ideas. The socio-economic system at the international level also favors the individualism and the economic difficulties of the territories, engendering withdrawal and rejection of the other. Education seems to be the first lever to fight against these phenomena. These include working on common history and showing the cultural richness of a society open to the world.

### **What would you like the EU to do to help cities facing such pressures?**

Two things are important for me: a real hospitality policy, that is to say, hospitality and granting more means. Having a policy of equality and social justice, democracy, respectful of human rights.

### **What is the County Doing?**

#### **Strong political leadership**

Migrant integration is a local priority. Today, more than ever, it is important to recognize the diversity that enriches the territory, make it an asset in the fight against the resurgence of prejudice and discrimination. Human solidarity constitutes a major value of the actions lead by Val-de-Marne's County local authority.

However, recognising diversity also means respecting the individuality through mutual aid, mutual respect between cultures, ages and territories. Therefore, the social and civic integration of migrants throughout the entirety migration process is a key issue for the County.

Val-de-Marne's politicians will is to give more importance to the actions led by the County, to better value them and also to improve them in order to enhance a higher impact and create an integrated local strategy by sharing and giving more coherence to the actions that it leads but also to the actions lead by civil society, associations/NGO, cities and all local stakeholders acting for this purpose.

### **Key actions:**

The County intends to develop actions that have an impact in the long term, as for example: mobilize actors (institutions and authorities, associations, companies, etc.) in the territory beyond the management of critical situations; ensure follow-up of long accompaniments and avoid breaks in accompanying courses; capitalize on experiences and examples of good practice came out from the exchange and learning process started with Arrival Cities.

- Access to rights: access to fundamental rights, legal and social rights: access to housing health, education, culture, etc. This includes allowing supporting /empowering migrants to be actors of "their own paths."
- Living together / Making society: promoting interculturality, enabling migrants to be actors in their environment, to be part of society, particularly through integration into local life and professional integration
- Undertaking research and mapping of existing actions in order to provide a clear picture of the work that is already being implemented in this policy area that can also be used as a starting point for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan. Thus the IAP will also represent a framework for co-ordinating actions at Department and Municipal levels.

Read the full IAP [here](#)

### **Examples of some Actions**

#### **" Gateway to University "**

University Paris Est Créteil's " Gateway to University "program provides support for refugees, asylum seekers and persons under subsidiary protection who present a university project. It is a question of allowing these students to acquire the level of French required to integrate disciplinary trainings at the French university, but also to accompany them in their projects in order to register, to leave University with a Diploma of Teaching French, Bachelor or Master. In particular, work is being done on possible equivalences of diplomas received in the countries of origin. Lastly, the scheme exempts its beneficiaries from tuition fees at the university, which amounts to 18,250 euros per year.

## KEY SUB THEMES

### COMMUNITY COHESION

Dresden was the location of the first workshop in the transnational programme. The theme was fitting given that Dresden has been the centre of a movement called Pegida , which at its height attracted more than 3000 people onto the streets of Dresden every Monday evening to protest at what was seen as the “ Islamisation” of western societies .

The issue of community cohesion has become a hot issue not just because there has been a steep increase in numbers of migrants but it is also linked to the growing concerns regarding security, which in turn is linked to the rise of extremism. One can say that Europe has entered the post 9/11 world. Whilst the process has not been as dramatic as the falling of the twin towers, nevertheless the process has been one of a drip drip kind which has impacted in Spain, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, UK, Holland, France, Belgium and Germany.

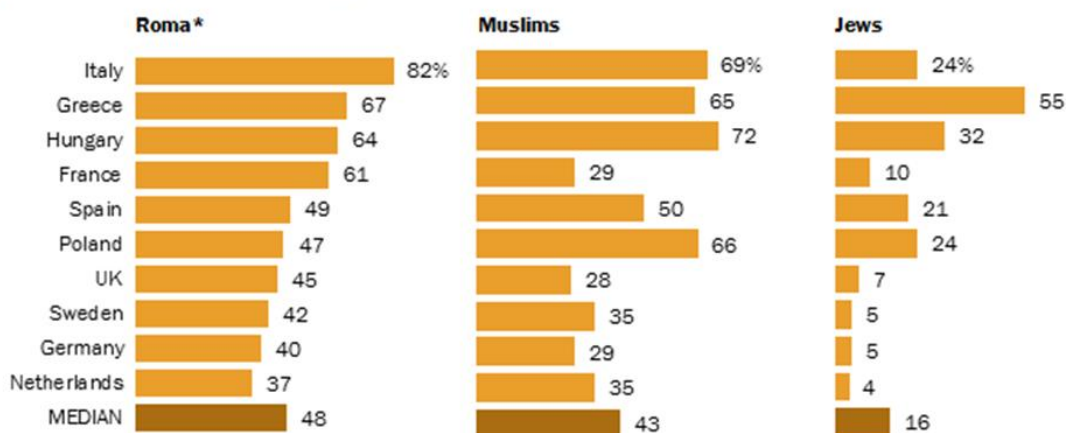
But terrorism is not the only concern people have about refugees. Many are also worried that they will be an economic burden. Half or more in five nations say refugees will take away jobs and social benefits. Hungarians, Poles, Greeks, Italians and French identify this as their greatest concern. Sweden and Germany are the only countries where at least half say refugees make their nation stronger because of their work and talents. Fears linking refugees and crime are much less pervasive, although nearly half in Italy and Sweden say refugees are more to blame for crime than other groups.

This development has undoubtedly gained in strength from shifts in public opinion which growing negativity towards certain groups. The table below the degree of prejudice against certain groups in several EU member states:

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### Negative opinions about Roma, Muslims in several European nations

*Unfavorable view of \_\_\_ in our country*



\*In UK, asked as "Gypsies or Roma."

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q36a-c.

Underlying these views are a number of false stereotypes that are often present in mainstream discourse:

- “Immigrants cause an increase in crime
- “Immigrants bring diseases into the country”, or “migrants are to blame for the return of certain diseases that were eradicated in Europe decades ago
- “Immigrant workers take our jobs.” This view is extremely common in European societies, especially among workers in sectors where there are large numbers of immigrants.
- “Immigrant workers drive down our wages.”
- “Immigrants abuse the welfare state.”
- “Immigrants behave as if the place belonged to them.”
- “Immigrants build parallel societies.” Migrants are often described as a social and political group alien to the members of their host society.
- “Immigrants’ children are lowering standards in our schools.”
- “Immigrant women live as a minority.” Non-European immigrants are often regarded as “backward” in terms of civilisation in general and gender equality in particular.

How to tackle such negative stereotypes and create community cohesion has been the focus of many actions undertaken by members of Arrival Cities.

#### **Example: 1- My Story, Your Story, Our Story- Exodus, Exclusion, Shoah- Oldenburg (DE)**



Oldenburg has been exploring the power of theatre to strengthen community cohesion, explore concepts of rights and responsibilities within the context of migration and develop empathy and understanding around the personal challenges that migrants face. My Story, Your Story, Our Story- Exodus, Exclusion, and Shoah was an intercultural and participatory theatre project



initiated by NGO IBIS (Intercultural Research Centre for Research, Documentation, Education and Counselling). The project was developed in response to the growing exposure of Arabic youth to anti-Semitic ideas through a variety of influences-the school, the media and family. A group of 16-26 year old young people worked with IBIS and a drama teacher with psychological training to develop a play based on the story of Anne Frank but also linking in personal stories of participants. Through workshops exploring the history of Jewish people and Germany's Nazi past, personal histories and prejudices were discussed through a therapeutic process to produce a piece of public performance.

### **Example 2 Shared table and Community Meals- Vantaa (FI)**



Vantaa is part of the metropolitan area of Helsinki and is the most multicultural municipality in Finland with the highest proportion of migrants. Shared Table is a project originating in Berlin which was adapted within Vantaa. The original focus of Shared Table was to tackle the issue of food waste and to collect and redirect food bound for bins to people who need it. In Vantaa this concept has been reused and expanded to bring the benefits of Shared Table to immigrant communities. Shared Table began a collaboration with R3 Immigrant Youth Support Association who became part of the delivery network of the project and started to organise communal shared free meals. Meal ingredients were sourced from leftover food from a local school and R3 worked with a team of local volunteers to source food, cook and organise/host the dinners. The dinners were attended by a diverse group of people and the dinners were convened by local Somalis and Romani's. This collaboration has been a successful and productive development for both initiatives to tackle food wastage and issues of community cohesion simultaneously.

### **Example 3: Citizen Dialogues. Dresden (DE)**



Citizen Dialogues have become an established part of Dresden's local governance system as a means of broadening opportunities for citizens to participate in the democratic process. During 2015-16, these dialogues were focused more specifically on the subject of migration and asylum. The aims of these citizen dialogues were to provide a platform for community cohesion and exchange; anticipate and de-escalate the tensions between local communities and refugee/immigrant communities. and provide factual information about actual numbers and circumstances of refugees in Dresden. The dialogues took a variety of formats taking place in different locations and targeting different participants and communities in Dresden. A series of large-scale dialogues of up to 700 people took place in the central church Kreuzkirche which involved a number of keynote speeches and discussion time where participants could voice their concerns and ask questions. Additionally smaller neighbourhood level dialogues were organized facilitated by specially trained moderators.

For more regarding this theme read the [workshop report](#)

### **ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET**

The EU Urban Agenda recognises that the issue of integration of migrants into the labour market (newly arrived, settled, foreign born and host country born) is one of the priority issues facing many urban authorities. This reflects also the view of EU networks such as Eurocities, CMER, LUDEN and others, which have highlighted that the integration of immigrants is one of those issues which local authorities find it a challenge to address.

EU and national policy has emphasised that the key to effective integration relates to integration into the labour market. However, despite many measures undertaken the available data reinforces the choice and relevance of this challenge:

- In 2014, 40.1 % of the non-EU-born population in the EU was assessed to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) compared with less than 22.5 % of the native-born population.
- For young people the situation is even bleaker. In 2013, 43.8 % of young people aged 16–29 in the EU-28 who were foreign-born were at risk of poverty and social exclusion compared with 28.1 % of young people who were native-born.
- Children (aged 0–17) with a migratory background (at least one foreign parent) are exposed to a particularly high risk of poverty. While the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children of nationals was 19.0 % in 2014, the corresponding rate for children with migratory background stood at 36.4 %.
- In the EU, the youth unemployment rate among native-born immigrant offspring is almost 50% higher than among the young with native-born parents.

- In many countries, the 2007-08 global financial and economic crisis has hindered the progress being made by immigrants, notably in labour market and economic integration. Job losses have been greater among immigrants than the native-born.
- A high level of education makes it easier to join the labour market. Yet, immigrants with higher-education degrees struggle more to enter the workplace than their native-born peers.
- In 2012-13, the immigrant unemployment rate was 11% across the OECD and 16% in the European Union – respectively 3 and 6 percentage points higher than native-born rates.
- 45% of unemployed immigrants in the EU had been looking for work for over 12 months in 2012-13.
- Another issue is that immigrants are often concentrated in particular sectors and industries. A number of sectors appear to favour immigrant labour, including construction, hotel and restaurant sectors, healthcare and social services (OECD, 2006a). Immigrants are also over-represented in unskilled services, and, in a number of countries, in domestic services. Within the above niches, they are more likely to be concentrated in jobs that native people do not want to do, i.e. those that are low paid, and reflect the “three Ds”: dirty, dangerous and difficult.
- 80% of immigrants in the European Union are of working age, compared with 66% of the native-born

To address this key issue the ARRIVAL CITIES network identified the following kinds of actions that support integration into the labour market.

1. Taking stock of immigrants’ skills to integrate adult immigrants, the point of departure is to take stock of their qualifications and skills.
2. Validation of existing skills and qualifications. The available evidence suggests that procedures for recognising foreign qualifications and converting them into their host-country equivalents are highly valued by employers and are associated with better labour-market outcomes
3. Learning the local language. Immigrants have many skills that the labour market should value more, but they also need to develop new ones – most notably the host-country’s language. However, in order to be effective, such training must account of different needs and be geared towards labour market integration.
4. Basic skills training .In several countries, between 20 and 40% of immigrants aged 25 to 54 have attended only primary education.
5. Mentorship programmes. Mentorship programmes have been shown to help tackle the obstacles that migrants face and have met with some success.

6. Tackling workplace discrimination. There is an emerging trend in workplace policy for businesses to tackle discrimination through voluntary diversity measures.

7. Improving local co-ordination. What is very clear from city , national, EU and International evaluations/reviews of actions/policies to improve the position of migrants in the labour market, is that a key weakness in terms of impact relates to a lack of an integrated approach and effective co-ordination.

8. Enterprise development

9. Work placements. Work experience placements provide a means to enable migrants to obtain some on job experience and at the same time bring about change in employer perceptions and assessment of the generic skills of migrants.

10. Social capital, network building and acculturation. Building solidarity and understanding between local residents is seen as an essential element in ensuring the wider participation of immigrants in society and as such their ability to access work.

How to support the integration of migrants into the labour market has been the focus of many actions undertaken by members of Arrival Cities.

### **Example 1: Coaching for Integration, Vantaa (FI)**

The unemployment rate in Vantaa was 12.4% in 2015 and though there are no accurate statistics for migrant or ethnic minority unemployment rates, migrant unemployment is currently thought to be around 30%, including new arrivals. Coaching for Integration was a pilot project which took place between April 2015 and December 2016 in the area of Hakunila-Lansimaki, Vantaa aimed at supporting employment and integration of immigrants. It was developed in response to a need for new experimental working methods to better serve the immigrant populations in the face of shrinking public sector resources. It aimed to create a lower threshold service of advice and support for integration and job seeking. Two officers from the municipality were relocated from council offices to the premises of a local NGO, Hakunila International Organisation. Through this relocation officers were able to link more directly with the NGO and also extend council services into a more front line service for communities who were more likely to be experiencing barriers to accessing services and gaining employment. The service benefitted from utilizing the groundwork and networks of a local NGO who had the understanding, relationships and physical space to reach people. Clients accessing the service strongly correlated with the nature and clientele of the NGO and the social makeup of the local area, with 80% of the clients are women who were Arabic or Somali speakers and mainly of a refugee background.

## **Example 2: Pro:connect- Integration through Education and Work. Oldenburg (DE)**



The combined dynamics of demographic change (aging population) and immigration underpin the need for initiatives to create better pathways for migrants into the German labour market. Oldenburg has a range services and programmes to help refugees integrate into society and the labour market and considerable effort has been put into qualifications and vocational training. Pro:connect is a non-profit organization founded in 2015 by the City of Oldenburg, the County of Ammerland and representatives of businesses. It is funded by the European Social Fund. It aims to better link job-seeking refugees and immigrants with potential employees in the city and provides free support and consultancy to both the job seekers and companies. A significant feature of this project is that it is strongly lead by companies. In particular, it helps deal with often complex legal issues around work permits and qualifications which can be onerous to companies, thereby removing barriers to companies taking on immigrants and refugees. In the context of Germany this vocational training is an essential way into work- companies tend to have a preference for this in-house training over qualifications gained through the school/college system. Pro:connect has enabled companies to become more proactive in the wider process of integration of immigrants and refugees into the Oldenburg area.

## **Example 3: Internship and Training Programme for Women, Val de Marne (FR)**

L'Office Municipal des Migrants (l'OMM) has been delivering a range of support services for migrants since 1985, including French language and society courses; support for parents around the school system; internships; information and signposting; cultural and social events. l'OMM has been delivering an Internship and Training Programme for Women in the town of Champigny which is targeted at immigrant women with little or no professional experience. It is open to women registered at a job centre and actively searching for work who have at least beginners level French. The course is free and participants receive some remuneration for attending. It is intensive and (24hours/week) and runs over a 7.5 month period. The course covers a range of skills and topics including French and mathematics courses; job search techniques; ICT skills; understanding the labour market and basic labour law; practical internships; entrepreneurial skills; communication skills; learning visits and artistic/creative/social activities. A key benefit of this programme is that it has developed links to potential participants prior to their move to the region and therefore a large number of participants apply from their country of origin. This means that immigrant women can start the

integration and employment process much sooner after they arrive in Champigny and therefore start building a life in their new home.

For more regarding this theme read the [workshop report](#)

## **RECEPTION SERVICES**

The number of migrants is growing and migration flows are increasingly complex. The ongoing conflict in Syria, the instability in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East and different parts of Africa is very likely to force more and more people to seek asylum in Europe which could bring along even larger migration flows in the future.

In addition, the demographic and economic factors especially in Sub-Saharan African countries as well as high poverty and unemployment rates in the Western Balkans may further aggravate this challenge.

Also, the situation is deteriorating for the large number of refugees in many of the countries in the neighbouring areas of the conflict zones like Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt where the lack of overall aid, education options and rising unemployment are pushing the refugees to continue their search for asylum in Europe. Furthermore, climate change suggests the need to prepare for significant refugee flows in the coming decades.

Providing accessible and responsive services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is critical if they are to settle effectively into a new country, rebuild their lives and contribute socially, economically, intellectually and culturally to the host community. The economic, social and personal costs of not being able to access relevant services to meet basic health, education and other needs are high for both individuals and the community. For example, prior to their arrival, refugees and asylum seekers may have experienced some or all of the following:

- Forced displacement
- Prolonged periods in refugee camps or marginalisation in urban settings
- Exposure to violence and abuse of human rights, including physical torture and gender and sexual-based violence
- Loss and separation from family members
- Deprivation of cultural and religious institutions and practices
- Periods of extreme poverty, including limited access to safe drinking water, shelter and food
- Severe constraints on access to health, education, employment and income support
- Prolonged uncertainty about the future.

As a result, settlement and reception needs for refugees and asylum seekers are significant and complex. This is reflected in the fact that the organisation of reception facilities differs greatly amongst Member States. Differences exist in the type of facilities and in the actors involved in the provision of reception. Such differences are not only apparent between Member States but also occur within some Member States at sub-state level. Unequal treatment between and within Member States has resulted, in some cases, in sub-standard reception conditions.

A number of reports have highlighted serious concerns regarding the quality of reception facilities and failure to respect human rights legislation. The large numbers of asylum seekers have created problems in the reception centres. Overcrowding is a major problem which also leads to violence in reception centres. There is not sufficient access to health care because the demand is too high. Overcrowding leads to a lack of privacy, lack of living space and a lack of sanitary facilities. This can create a dangerous situation for women and children. In addition, there is a lack of interpreters available, information is insufficiently provided and the asylum procedure is very lengthy. Another problem is that children cannot always go to school. Furthermore, cases of sexual violence against women and children have been reported.

It is cities that are faced with the challenge of meeting these complex needs. Cities located in arrival, transit and destination countries in Europe are finding themselves in an especially critical position with regards to the social, humanitarian and financial consequences of the refugee flow. Regardless of specific competences at different governance levels, it is typically up to municipalities to ensure that asylum seekers settle in well for the duration of their stay, however short or long it may be. This situation requires systematic and coordinated efforts at local level involving a range of stakeholders.

Local authorities are supposed to manage this temporary reception of asylum seekers in front-line and transit cities. They need to offer asylum seekers temporary accommodation until a decision has been taken about their status. Once the asylum seeker has received a status, either as a refugee or as a person receiving humanitarian protection, local authority's play a role in ensuring housing and starting with the integration processes of the beneficiary into the host society. In general, regional and local authorities do not only have to implement national policies, but often have to develop ad hoc measures. Achieving an inclusive and integrated approach tackling both the urgent and the medium-long term asylum seekers challenge requires governance in partnership. All levels of governments need to complement their respective strategy and action.

How to address the reception needs of migrants has been the focus of many actions undertaken by members of Arrival Cities.

### Example 1: REACT, Thessaloniki



With the closure of the Balkan borders in March 2016 there has been a shift away from transit migration towards longer term settlement and integration of refugees within the Thessaloniki area. Asylum seekers are increasingly choosing to stay longer in the city rather than seek transfer to other countries.

The REACT (Refugee, Assistance, Collaboration, Thessaloniki) project began in May 2016 and is managed by the Municipality of Thessaloniki in partnership with the UNHCR. It is implemented through local networks of local authorities and NGOs. The focus of the project is to establish accommodation in the city for refugees in private apartments and with host families, combined with the provision of basic support services. This includes accommodation maintenance, interpretation and accompaniment to health and other public services, legal and psycho-social support and access to health and education. The municipality is working with estate agents and landlords and promoting the project to prospective host families. Estate Agents have supported the project pro bono by promoting the project to landlords and homeowners, putting up posters and disseminating information materials. REACT has collaborated with TV and radio channels to promote the programme to prospective providers of accommodation. It also processes and selects interested host families and brokers and matches them to appropriate referrals awaiting accommodation. With each organisation coordinating through the network and delivering on its area of expertise REACT is an example of a holistic approach to supporting refugee's integration.



### **Example 2: Health Commission, Roquetas de Mar (ES)**



The Health Commission is an example of strategic joined up working across the municipality of Roquetas de Mar to provide appropriate and accessible health services to migrants- both established and newly arrived.. It was formed in 2008 and is made up of 5 city councils, 7 NGOs, migrants associations and health care professionals. It acts as a central communication hub to coordinate initiatives, share information, develop ideas, co-create strategies and exploit the synergies between the different organisations.

The commission has developed a number of initiatives to join up health promotion with other migrant integration work. In particular it has focused on improving migrant access to health programmes, health education and supporting migrant women in vulnerable situations. Examples of projects include incorporating health education as part of Spanish lesson programmes; training health agents and developing action plans to deal with different aspects of health; and education around household cleanliness and hygiene to prevent infectious diseases. The Commission also hosts regular seminar events bringing together different actors to look at specific issues around migrant health, latest research and health inequality. The programme places a high value on sustaining active networks. Through the network, NGOs and migrant associations can better coordinate with health care institutions and professions to make access to treatment more direct and rapid.

### **Example 3: The National Network of SPRAR- Experience of Messina**

Messina is a key transit location for migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy. The management of refugee arrivals is through a two-stage reception system. Stage one deals with immediate issues including identification and registration by police, health screening and emergency accommodation in camps. Stage two is focused on supporting migrants who wish to stay in Italy, known as SPRAR (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees).

SPRAR is Italy's national system for providing longer-term accommodation and support for refugees and unaccompanied minors. It is delivered by localised SPRAR networks, made up of local institutions who implement reception services and a set of special projects. In Messina, there are two SPRAR centres- Castoreale and Rodi Milici with a total of 51 family units. They are managed by the Cooperative Azione Sociale. The budget for both centres is €1.3 million/year. The Cooperative works in collaboration with a range of stakeholders- public, private and the voluntary and third sector to support migrants in an integrated way. This enables individual support and planning for each migrant. In Messina, private companies work with the SPRARs to offer work and internship opportunities and various third sector organisations offer recreational, social and cultural activities. Careers experts work with linguistic and cultural mediators to undertake an analysis of skills and employability. This results in bespoke training and apprenticeship opportunities being offered.

For more regarding this theme read the [workshop report](#)

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Education is generally seen as a crucial precondition for upward social mobility and could then boost future life chances of second-generation immigrants. Moreover, investing in education could also indirectly foster the social and cultural integration of immigrant parents.

The integration of migrants has increasingly become a key area for policy focus, with measures to prepare immigrants and their descendants so they may be more active participants in society, for example, through education and training.

This focus is reflected at an EU level. The European agenda for the integration of third-country nationals, highlighted that education is one of the cornerstones of migrant integration in the EU, as it not only has the potential to provide adequate skills to be successful in the labour market but also contributes to the active participation of migrants through the exchange of cultural values. Furthermore, as migrants account for a growing share of the EU's population, they also play an important role in relation to achieving the overall targets for education as set out in Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the EU's strategic framework for education and training 2020.

The situation faced by public service providers and migrants is complex. The available data shows:

- An analysis for the EU-28 population aged 25-54 (hereafter referred to as the core working-age), shows that in 2016 just over one third (35.5 %) of non-EU-born migrants (hereafter referred to as migrants born outside the EU) had successfully completed at most a lower secondary level of education.

- Across the whole of the EU-28, less than one fifth (18.6 %) of the core working-age population living in their Member State of birth possessed at most a lower secondary level of education in 2016, while the corresponding share among foreign-born migrants of core working-age rose to 31.1 %.
- In 2016, there was little difference between the proportion of native-born (33.6 %) and foreign-born (31.7 %) core working-age populations in the EU-28 with a tertiary level of educational attainment.
- In contrast, in 2016, more than half of the foreign-born core working-age populations of Ireland, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and Poland had successfully attained a tertiary level of educational attainment.
- When compared with the native-born core working-age population, a slightly higher share of the migrant population (both those born in another EU Member State or those born outside the EU) participated in adult learning.
- Young persons who were foreign-born were at greater risk of leaving education and training early. Young persons who were foreign-born or foreign citizens were generally at greater risk of leaving education without having completed more than a lower secondary level of education. This pattern was particularly apparent among those young persons who were born outside the EU and those young people who were non-EU citizens.
- In 2016, among the 18 EU Member States for which data are available, the highest shares of foreign-born early leavers from education and training were found in Spain (32.9 %), Italy (30.0 %) and Germany (23.1 %).
- The share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) was considerably higher among migrants born outside the EU. In 2016, some 13.3 % of the native-born population aged 15-29 within the EU-28 could be described as NEET. This share rose significantly higher among foreign-born populations and non-national citizens, in particular for those who were born outside the EU and those who were non-EU citizens. In 2016, the NEET rate for young people aged 15-29 in the EU-28 was 13.3 % among the native-born population, while the rates for young people born in another EU Member State (16.3 %) and those born outside the EU (24.6 %) were higher.

In all Western European countries, students of immigrant origin generally lag behind their native peers in terms of years of education completed, kind of qualification attained, and competences acquired in the basic domains of mathematics, reading and science. They are also more likely to drop out of school, to repeat a year, and to end up in less prestigious school tracks. A number of factors have been identified which account for these outcomes.

Substantial numbers of children across Europe are educated in schools with high concentrations of children who are disadvantaged on the basis of their socio- economic, ethnic or cultural background, or because of a disability. Their separation or concentration in specific schools and

classrooms harms their learning opportunities and is a clear violation of their right to education and their right not to be discriminated against.

In addition to the issue of school segregation, the recent economic crisis and accompanying austerity measures have resulted in reduced funding of education in many European countries. Cuts have disproportionately affected the groups most in need of support. Lack of specialists for children with disabilities, reduction in programmes to support the cultural and linguistic integration of migrant children, cuts in pre-school programmes and scholarships, and termination of projects to prevent school dropouts are all measures that tend to have more adverse effects on the most vulnerable children, thereby reducing their educational opportunities.

Another factor that acts as a hindrance to the academic success of immigrant students derives from the fact that in many cases their parents have a limited knowledge of how the host-country educational system works, and more generally on what are its implicit values, cultural norms and expectations. Therefore, educational systems where choices are crucial for school progression are likely to exacerbate immigrant/native gaps. In particular, the early selection of students into rigid tracks with differentiated curricula can be detrimental, because the earlier the choice takes place, the more important the guidance role played by families in decision making.

Lastly, since immigrants are over represented in the least privileged strata of the population, traditional mechanisms of social stratification account for much of the immigrant learning disadvantage: fewer material and educational resources at home make it more difficult for students of lower socio-economic background to attain good results in school; when parents themselves attained only low education, they may lack the skills and/or the inclination to help their children with homework; moreover, the value conferred to education varies across social classes, just like the costs associated with delaying entry into the labour market: hence, an early disengagement can emerge among pupils who know they will not stay long in school.

How to improve the educational attainment of migrants has been the focus of many actions undertaken by members of Arrival Cities.

### **Example 1: Welcome Class, Amadora (PT)**



The Welcome Class has evolved as a methodology of language learning conceived within a plurilingual and multicultural context. It is an initiative aimed at young immigrants to provide them with extra support and education around learning the Portuguese language. It is based on activities of linguistic immersion and extends beyond language learning to learning about culture and customs. The Welcome Class represents from the social point of view, a methodology for social integration and from the cultural point of view, a process for growing respect for the other, their values, beliefs and cultural habits. Flexibility is built into the programme to cater to individual learning needs and circumstances. Students are able to join the class at any time during the year and the length that they participate relates to their own learning needs. The cultural background and the individual personalities and experience are taken into account in order to draw up individual learning plans. This language learning is intrinsically linked to the language of schooling and subject learning as well as helping students adapt to host countries teaching/learning methodologies.

### **Example 2: Learning Spanish Language and Culture, Roquetas de Mar**



The Spanish Language Learning and Culture Programme is a key service delivered by the Municipal Office for immigration in Roquetas de Mar. . It is considered very important that this programme is available to all migrants irrespective of their legal status- to qualify for the course migrants need to be resident of the city but this does not require any legal migrant status. In particular, the target group of this programme is migrants over 18 who are out of the educational system and labour market. It provides an integrated process for cultural and linguistic learning and well-being. Broadly, the programme can be understood as comprising 3 main elements- Spanish Language learning; Understanding society and culture- Learning the basic rules, values, functionality, rights, duties and customs of Spanish society and promoting the values of peaceful co-existence and democracy; Personal development, life skills and career development. This programme successfully combines language learning with integration services for migrants. It offers an affordable and accessible route into society and work via language learning, capacity building and skills development and cultural/philosophical understanding.

### Example 3: Open Schools-Open Yards: Linking Non-Formal Education to Community Building and Formal Education. Thessaloniki (EL)



Thessaloniki is seeing the increasing urbanisation of refugees who are moving out of camps and into the city. There is a need to support and better integrate these new residents into the formal and informal education systems. Additionally, It is a city of high density and lacks public space- in its neighbourhoods the number of parks, squares, playgrounds and outdoor sports areas are insufficient for local populations.

Open Schools-Open Yards is a pilot programme designed to tackle both these issues of lack of public space and access to education. The Municipality of Thessaloniki does not have a mandate for formal education but does have the responsibility of the school infrastructure and activities beyond formal schooling hours. This project aims to open up access to school playgrounds outside of school hours for local communities, for informal learning activities and community use. This pilot is taking place in 6 primary schools and the schools targeted are in areas with high migrant and refugee populations. The process of opening up the school land to communities is happening in combination with efforts to support more social cohesion between the host and refugee communities through informal educational activities. It is hoped that these activities will act as a bridge for refugees to become more involved in the education system.

For more regarding this theme read the [workshop report](#)

### **CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

Whilst there is a generation consensus that securing work is the most effective way to secure the integration of migrants and refugees, there is also a growing realisation that many migrants and refugees will not enter into the labour market easily or at all. For this reason actions that

support the civic participation of migrants and refugees are increasingly also recognised as an important tool to support the integration of migrants and refugees through providing access to “others” and serving as a means to promote core values alongside creating mechanisms for contributing to civic life at a local level.

One of the most common frustrations of newcomers and of the people in the receiving societies that come into contact with them, is the enormous waste in human capital (knowledge, degrees, job experience, networks, etc.) caused by the move from one place to another, especially for refugees and migrants. Where they have been carried out in close cooperation with interventions in other domains (language courses allowing for a faster levelling of the playing-field for newcomers, the creation of new legislative frameworks for the recognition of degrees or that allow them to enter the labour market more quickly and freely, etc.), civic participation actions have helped people regain momentum in their search for work. They tend to build on skills and knowledge that are considered “invisible”, so that these can be fostered and shared with the larger community. This way, they have helped people discover and gain new skills, or translate their skills into marketable activities – especially those that fall outside of the regular activation programmes, as they are hard to reach.

How to secure more effective participation in civic life has become a major preoccupation at all levels of governance. The reasons are very clear. There is a growing alienation from political life. This is reflected in lower voter turnout but also in voters voting for “non-establishment” parties or personalities. The election of Macron and Trump are clear examples of this trend.

There is a decline of social capital. That is to say a decline in the numbers of people who through volunteering or directly as individuals get involved in discussions regarding local/national/European issues. Pick up any policy document or a party political publication and the issue of citizen/civic participation will be highlighted as a key goal.

However, despite this strong focus/high priority, there is very little evidence that shows any kind of significant reversal of the trends highlighted above. Indeed, if anything the evidence suggests at best stagnation (only reaching the “usual suspects”) or ongoing decline in participation.

The above description is of course disputable. In disputing the above depiction, particular recourse is made to the rise in numbers of people using social media in respect to “public issues”. That is to say, whilst less people are visible in local meetings and local groups, there is a growing virtual level of participation. This kind of “click activism” is particularly reflected in the growth of mailing lists centred on particular policy issues or specific issues or causes/campaigns.

The causes of the above trends are contested but they include:

- Apathy. Increasing numbers people have a strong tendency to be apathetic towards the democratic process, and are strongly disinclined to vote. There is also a strong element of

complacency to aggravate problems caused by apathy. This is not restricted to the EU and to EP elections – it is true across the all nations and all elections, supranational, National and local.

- Pressures. Most observers would agree that it is the case that people are now subject to far more pressure (and in particular demands on their time) than ever before. All of these pressures strongly mitigate against any time consuming Involvement in the democratic process, and that lack of involvement in turn leads to absenteeism.
- Lack of identification. There is a general lack of identification with the EU and its institutions across all ages and all demographics.
- Rise of single issue groups. One other phenomenon in recent years has been the rise of single issue pressure groups. In the UK the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has more than one million members. This is more than all of the political parties put together. Other pressure groups are international, environmental groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have members and activists in all EU countries. If people identify with these single issue pressure groups, and give them their support and possibly their money, they are potentially less likely to engage with mainstream political parties.

In addition to the above specific causes of alienation there are also others which also account for the low participation of migrants.

- Poverty. Migrant workers often have a lower standard of living than the indigenous population. Although some are professional people (doctors, lawyers, accountants) many others are engaged in unskilled or semiskilled manual labour. Poverty itself is one of the major inhibiting factors on turnout. If all of an individual's attention is concentrated on finding and keeping work, they have less time and energy to engage in the democratic process. Therefore the fact that migrants generally have a lower standard of living than the indigenous population means that they are less likely to vote.
- Identification with original country. It is naturally the case that although migrants have "chosen" to settle in an EU country, they still strongly identify with their country of origin. This means that they feel less engaged with their country of residence, and therefore less inclined to engage in the democratic process.

How to engage migrants through civic participation activities has been the focus of many actions undertaken by members of Arrival Cities.

### **Example: 1 The Migrants Integration Council, Thessaloniki (EL)**

The Migrant Integration Council (MIC) has been set up at the municipal level as the formal and legitimate body to represent the migrant voice and express migrant concerns in Thessaloniki. The MIC has been operating since the beginning of 2017 and it has undertaken a number of initiatives to try and ensure better representation of refugees and asylum seekers (in the



absence of any official associations representing the recently arrived refugees). This has involved a targeted information campaign conducted in refugee and community centres. Meetings were held for those who expressed an interest and individuals were supported to become members of the council. The MIC is now composed of representatives of the City Council, refugee community, Greek human rights NGOs, Thessaloniki's bar association and migrants associations.

### **Example 2 Participatory Citizenship Initiative 'Cidadania Participativa', Amadora (PT)**



Cidadania Participativa is an initiative of the youth cultural organisation- Associacao Cultural Moinho da Juventude (ACMJ) in the neighbourhood of Cova da Moura, Amadora. The objective of the Cidadania Participativa project is to combat poverty and social exclusion through the reinforcement of active participation in society, personal development and acquisition of professional qualifications. The project also aims to combat power imbalances by providing residents with the tools to advocate and fight for their rights and independently problem solve. This includes supporting migrants in acquiring legal documentation and also facilitating inter-generational dialogue through working with special facilitators called the Tandem Team. The Tandem Team model of working is based on teams of 2 people- 1 of whom is an 'experience expert' ie has a migrant background and understands the challenges through their own experience of integration and the other who is an 'academic technician'- who has more of an academic knowledge of the social challenges of integration and broad knowledge of the way this is played out by the socio-political system.

### **Example 3: The Forum for Integration and Citizenship, Roquetas de Mar (ES)**

The Forum for Integration and Citizenship was established as a mechanism for all agents and organisations involved in migration management in the municipality to come together, discuss and input into policy and activity. It provides a forum to facilitate the dialogue between migrant communities and the host society. It acts as a conduit through which the views and proposals of

organisations working with migrants can be channelled into municipal policy and practice. The forum holds at least 2 meetings a year with all its members. This involves reviewing the current situation and actions taken by the municipality. It also involves reviewing and evaluating municipal plans for the future and therefore influencing and making recommendations for future action. Within this structure, working groups exist to focus on specific issues. Experience has shown that the Forum has in particular been very useful when dealing with critical situations such as incidences of ethnic based violence. It has also been an effective vehicle to generate a number of new initiatives.

For more regarding this theme read the [workshop report](#)

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section provides some of the key conclusions and recommendations emerging from the transnational exchange programme relating to the five sub themes.

### **Community Cohesion**

The key conclusion and recommendation here is that at local level it is essential to use a variety of tools to support community cohesion. Such tools include:

- Measures to countering of myths and misinformation about minorities
- Measures to 'understand the stranger'
- Measures to use 'the power of sport' to bring communities together
- Measures to develop new communications strategies to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging
- Measures to more effectively map and engage with diversity in local areas
- Measures to anticipate tensions and conflicts within and between communities
- Measures to develop professional skills to understand and respond to cohesion issues
- • Measures to prevent radicalization of young people

### **Labour Market Integration**

Partners identified the following typology of actions that can support the integration of migrants into the labour market:

- Taking stock of immigrants' skills
- Validation of existing skills and qualifications
- Learning the local language
- Basic skills training
- Mentorship programmes

- Tackling workplace discrimination
- Enterprise development
- Work placements

## **Reception Services**

Cities located in arrival, transit and destination countries in Europe are finding themselves in an especially critical position with regards to the social, humanitarian and financial consequences of the refugee flow. Regardless of specific competences at different governance levels, it is typically up to municipalities to ensure that asylum seekers settle in well for the duration of their stay, however short or long it may be. Local authorities are supposed to manage this temporary reception of asylum seekers in front-line and transit cities. They need to offer asylum seekers temporary accommodation until a decision has been taken about their status. Once the asylum seeker has received a status, either as a refugee or as a person receiving humanitarian protection, local authorities' play a role in ensuring housing and starting with the integration processes of the beneficiary into the host society. In general, regional and local authorities do not only have to implement national policies, but often have to develop ad hoc measures. Here a key issue in improving the local responses is better coordination, more knowledge and exchange of practices, including initiatives taken by local NGOs.

## **Education**

A number of key actions were identified to improve the educational attainment of migrants:

- Teachers training on diversity must be improved. A commitment to improving outcomes for migrant children and reducing the achievement gap requires a coherent and integrated school policy on dealing with diversity in the learning environment and curriculum.
- Teachers who succeed in engaging the parents of their diverse pupils—as well as cooperating with community organisations—will further support achievement in their schools.
- Production of leaflets and flowcharts, both for parents and schools. If the parents are given information and training to understand the educational system, and what opportunities there are, they will be able to help their children make good and deliberate choices for their future.
- Contact has to be established between the vocational students with a minority background and business and industry to pave the way for apprenticeships.
- It is important to do more and broader research on what kind of practice is good and should be implemented in the classroom. In teacher education, researchers and policymakers have to collaborate on the implementation.

- It is crucial for students to be able to follow lessons in the language of instruction; a lack of comprehension may leave them feeling stressed, anxious, or bored. It may eventually lead to behavioural problems and failure at school.
- It is crucial that schools support immigrants' continued use and study of their mother tongue. Such study will both help students learn the host-country language and potentially enrich the education system by introducing linguistic and learning diversity.
- Make use of the rapidly growing cohort of highly educated second-generation young adults in Europe as mentors.
- The final point concerns countries where residential segregation produces a disproportionate concentration of disadvantaged students in some schools. In order to minimize the risk of a vicious circle, career incentives could be provided to the most qualified and motivated teachers to stay in these otherwise marginal schools. Also, additional resources should be made available for such schools, enabling them to offer their students remedial courses and supplementary educational materials.

### **Civic Participation**

Civic participation in refugee community and migrant organisations can help newly arrived migrants and refugees settle and develop a social network. In addition, these organisations give refugees and migrants a voice. However, since 9/11, Madrid, London, Paris, Nice and other attacks, the fact that migrants and refugees organise themselves is not always seen as something positive, but rather a step towards self-chosen isolation, in particular Muslim organisations are perceived as negative and associated with terrorism and separatism.

There is a wide range of ways in which immigrants may participate in civic life. The method of participation depends on a variety of factors, including their civic traditions, political structures in their countries of origin, and current capacity in the host country. Hence it is important to try and understand what is the meaning of civic participation in their culture?

It is critical to appreciate the social organization of immigrant communities in order to understand the structures through which they participate. For example, faith-based and spiritual institutions have different functions in different immigrant communities.

Ethnic media provide another means to support the social organization of immigrant communities, primarily because the communication is conducted in the immigrants' native languages.

Native Mother Tongue classes and citizenship workshops also provide a means to develop participation. These programmes often attract large numbers of immigrants, particularly recent newcomers and provide another way to reach them.

Some migrant cultures promote values that are contradictory to democratic principles, for example, patriarchal structures that serve to obstruct the participation of women or promote the expectation that the leader will take care of everyone in the community.